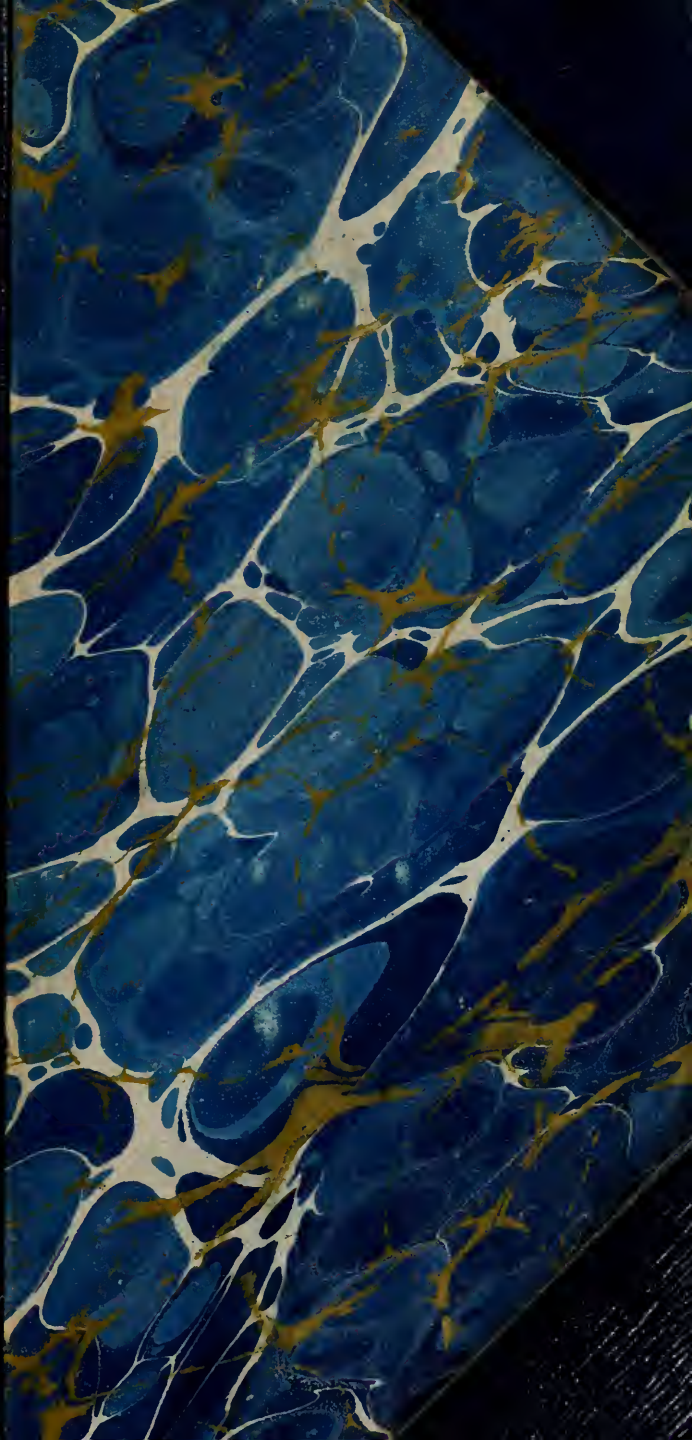
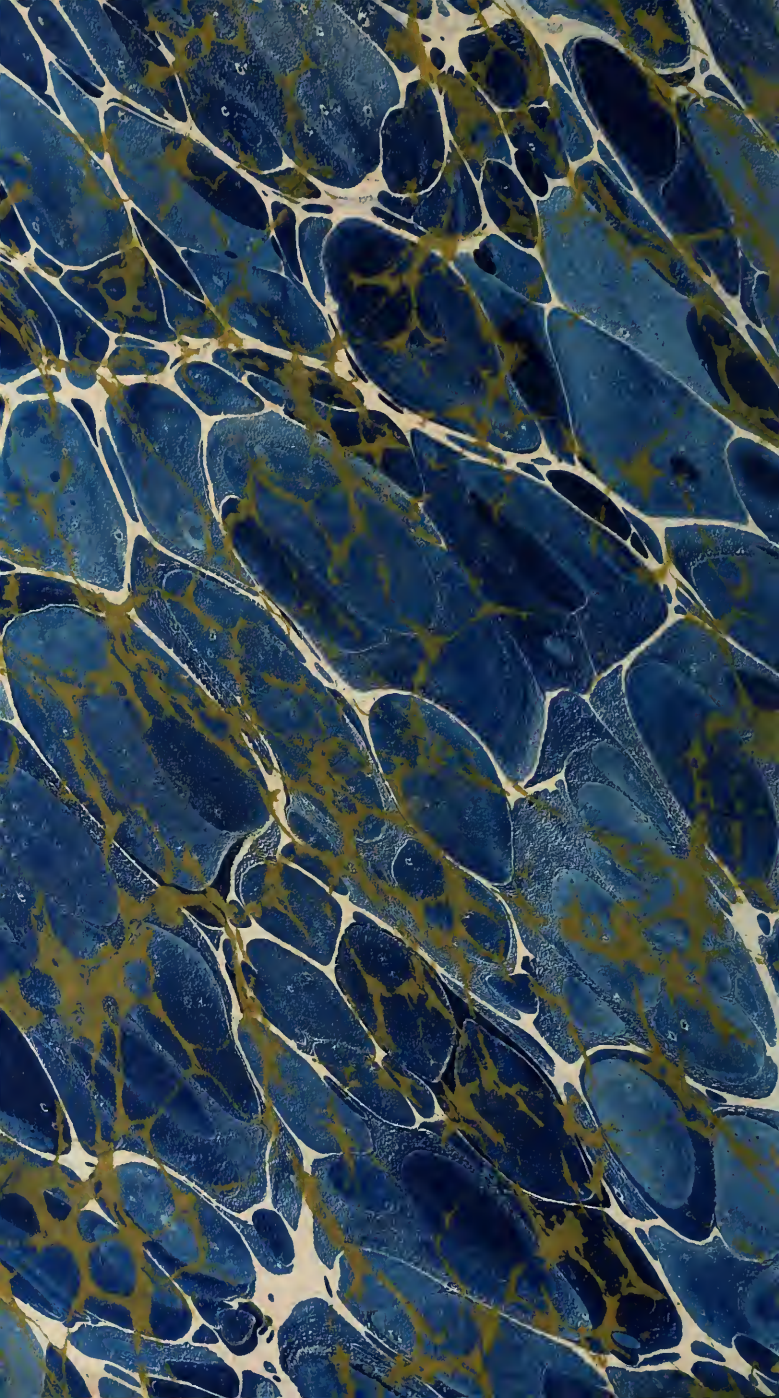


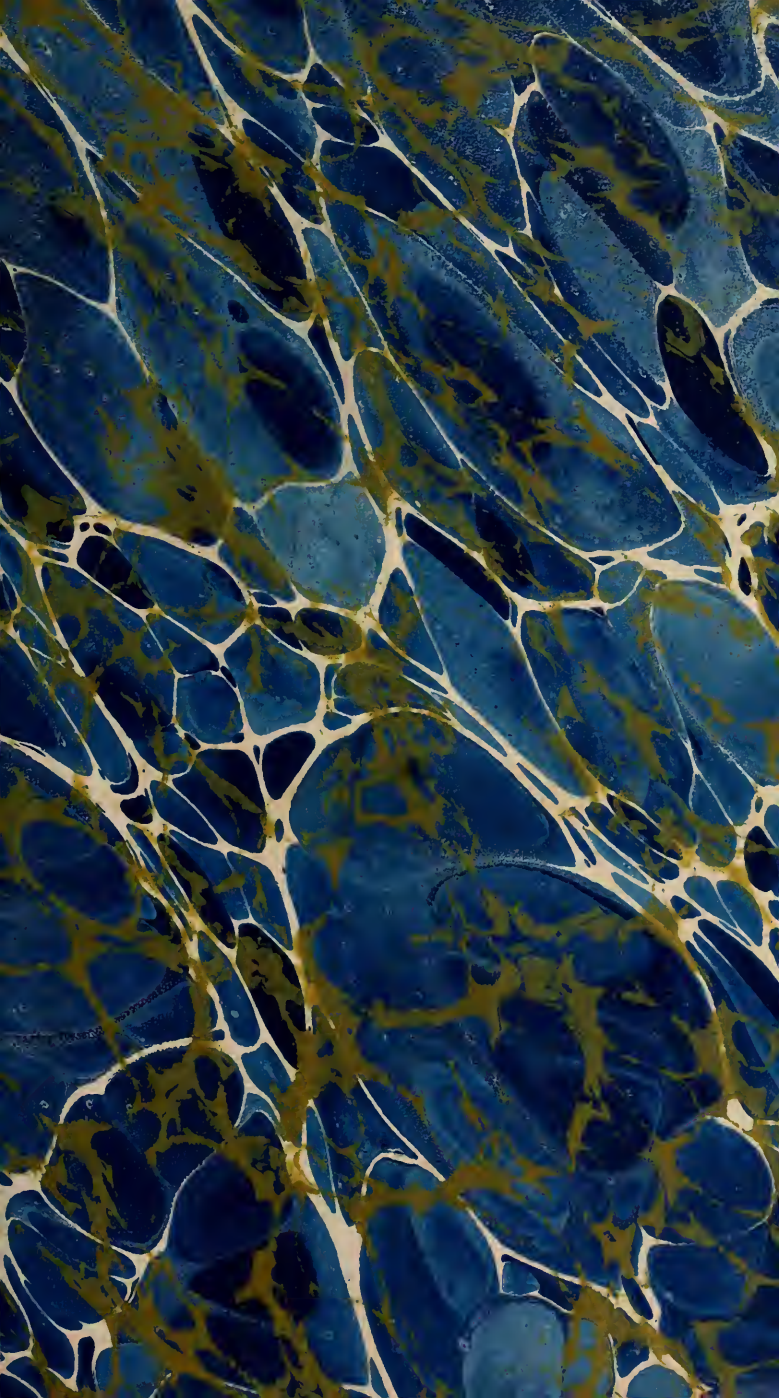
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M A R S T O N :

OR, THE

SOLDIER AND STATESMAN.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE CROLY, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "SALATHIEL," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MARSTON,
OR
MEMOIRS OF A STATESMAN.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“ Go, lovely rose,
Tell her, that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

“ Tell her, that’s young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That, hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended, died.’

“ Then, die, that she,
The common fate of all things rare,
May read in thee
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet, and fair.”

WALLER.

WHILE I was meditating on the hidden meanings of this letter, in which my Jewish friend seemed to have imbibed something of the mystical spirit of Germany

itself, I was startled by a tremendous uproar around the hospital—the drums beat to arms, the garrison hastily mustered, the population poured into the streets, and a strong and startling light through all the casements, showed that some great conflagration had just begun. The intelligence soon spread, that the Hôtel de Ville, the noblest building in the province, a fine specimen of Italian architecture of the seventeenth century, and dear to the city, as containing some incomparable pictures by the Italian masters, and a *chef-d'œuvre* of Rubens; had been set on fire by a bomb, and was now in a blaze from battlement to ground. The next intelligence was still more painful. The principal convent of the city, which was close in its rear, had taken fire, and the unfortunate nuns were seen at the windows, in the most imminent danger of perishing. Feeble as I was, I immediately arose. The Béguine rushed in at the moment, wringing her hands, and uttering the wildest cries of terror at the probable destruction of all those unhappy women. I volunteered my services, which were accepted; and I hurried out to assist in saving them if possible. The spectacle was overwhelming.

The Hôtel de Ville was a large and nearly insulated building, with a kind of garden-walk round three of its sides, which was now filled with the populace. The garrison exhibited all the activity of the national character, in their efforts to extinguish the flames. Scaling-ladders were applied to the windows, men mounted on them thick as bees; fire-buckets were passed from hand to hand, for the fire-engines had been long since destroyed by the cannonade;

and there seemed to be some hope of saving the structure—when a succession of agonizing screams fixed every eye on the convent, where the fire had found its way to the stores of wood and oil, and shot up like the explosion of gunpowder. The efforts of the troops were now turned to save its unhappy inmates, but the intense fury of the flames defeated every attempt. The scaling-ladders no sooner touched the casements, than they took fire; the very walls were so hot that none could approach them; and every new gust swept down a sheet of flame, which put the multitude to flight in all directions. Artillery was now brought out to breach the walls; but, while there remained a hundred and fifty human beings within, it was impossible to make use of the guns. All efforts at length ceased; and the horror was deepened, if such it could be, by seeing now and then a distracted figure rush to a casement, make gestures of terror and misery to the crowd, and then rush back again with a howl of despair.

I proposed to the French officers, that they should dig under the foundations, and thus open a way of escape through the vaults. The attempt was made, but it had the ill success of all the rest. The walls were too massive for our strength; and the pickaxe and spade were thrown aside in despair. From the silence which now seemed to reign within, and the volumes of smoke which poured from the casements, it began to be the general impression, that the fate of the nuns was already decided; and the officers were about to limber up their guns and retire; when I begged their chief to make one trial more, and fire at

a huge iron door, which closed a lofty archway leading to the Hôtel de Ville. He complied; a six-pound ball was sent against the door, and it flew off its hinges. To the boundless rejoicing, and astonishment of all, we saw the effect of this fortunate shot, in the emergence of the whole body of the nuns from the smoking and shattered building. They had been driven, step by step, from the interior, into the long, stone-built passage, which in old times had formed a communication with the town, and which had probably not been used for a century. The shot had burst it open.

The troops and populace now rushed into the Hôtel de Ville, to meet and convey them to places of safety. I followed, with the same object, yet with some unaccountable feeling that I had a personal interest in the rescue. The halls and apartments were on the huge and heavy scale of ancient times, and I was more than once bewildered in ranges of corridors filled with the grim reliques of civic magnificence, fierce portraits of forgotten men of city fame, portentous burghers, and mailed captains of train bands. The unhappy women were at length gathered from the different galleries through which they had scattered in their fright, and were mustered at the head of the principal entrance, or *grand escalier*, at whose foot an escort of the troops was drawn up for their protection.

But the terrors of that fearful night were not yet at an end. The light of the conflagration had caught the eye of the besiegers, and a whole flight of shells were sent in its direction. Some burst in the street,

putting the populace to flight on every side ; and, while the women were on the point of passing down the stair, a crash was heard above, and an enormous shell burst through the roof, carrying down shattered rafters, stones, and a cloud of dust. The batteries had found our range, and a succession of shells burst above our heads, or tore their way downwards. All now was confusion and shrieking. At length, one fell on the centre of the *escalier*, rolled down a few steps, and, bursting, tore up the whole stair, leaving only a deep gulf between us and the portal. The women fled back through the apartment. I now regarded all as lost ; and expecting the roof to come down every moment on my head, and hearing nothing round me but the bursting and hissing of those horrible instruments of havoc, I hurried through the chambers, in the hope of finding some casement, from which I might reach the ground. They were all lofty and difficult of access, but I at length climbed up to one, from which, though twenty or thirty feet from the path below, I determined to take the plunge.

I was about to leap, when, to my infinite surprise, I heard my name pronounced. I stopped. I heard the words—“ *Adieu, pour toujours !* ” All was dark within the room, but I returned, to discover the speaker. It was a female, on her knees near the casement, and evidently preparing to die in prayer. I took her hand, and led her passively towards the window ; she wore the dress of a nun, and her veil was on her face. As she seemed exhausted with terror, I gently removed it to give her air. A sheet of flame

suddenly threw a broad light across the garden, and in that face I saw—Clotilde! She gave a feeble cry, and fainted in my arms.—To die for her, or, to die with her, seemed to me then preferable to all existence.

But, ladders were brought, our escape was accomplished; and before I slept, I had seen the being with whom my very existence was bound up, safely lodged with the principal family of the town. Slept, did I say? I never rested, for an instant. Thoughts, reveries, a thousand wild speculations, rose, fell, chased each other through my brain; and all left me feverish, half-frantic, and delighted.

At the earliest moment which could be permitted by the formalities of France, even in a besieged town; I flew to Clotilde. She received me with the candour of her noble nature. Her countenance brightened with sudden emotion, as she approached me. In the *salle de reception*, she sat surrounded by the ladies of the family, still full of enquiries on the perils of the night, congratulations on her marvellous escape, and no slight approval of the effect of the convent costume on the contour of her fine form and expressive features. My entrance produced a diversion in her favour, and I was showered with showy speeches from the seniors of the circle; the younger portion suddenly relapsing into that frigid propriety, which the Mademoiselle retains until she becomes the Madame, and which she then flings off for ever, like her girlish wardrobe. But their eyes took their full share, and if glances at the “Englishman” could have been transferred into words; I should have enjoyed a very animated conversation on the part of the *Jeunes In-*

nocentes. But I shrank from the panegyric of my "heroism," as it was pronounced in all the tones of courtesy; and longed for the voice of Clotilde alone. The circle at last withdrew, and I was left to the most exquisite enjoyment of which the mind of man is capable—the full, fond, and faithful outpouring of the heart of the woman he loves. Strange to say, I had never exchanged a syllable with Clotilde before; and yet we now as deeply understood each other; were as much in each other's confidence, and had as little of the repulsive ceremonial of a first interview, as if we had conversed for years.

"You saved my life," said she; "and you are entitled to my truest gratitude, to my last hour.—I had made up my mind to die. I was exhausted, in the attempt to escape from that scene of horrors. When at last I reached the Hôtel de Ville, and found that all the sisterhood had been driven back from the great stair by the flames, I gave up all hope: and, may I acknowledge, unblamed, to you—but from *you* what right have I now to conceal any secret of my feelings?—I was not unwilling to lay down a life, which seemed to grow darker from day to day."

"You were wearied of your convent life?" said I, fixing my eyes on hers with eager inquiry. "But you must not tell me that you are a nun. The new laws of France forbid that sacrifice. My sweet Clotilde, while I live, I shall never recognise your vows."

"You need not," she answered, with a smile that glowed

'Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue.'

"I have never taken them. The superior of the

convent was my near relative, and I fled to her protection from the pursuit of one whom I never could have respected, and whom later thoughts have made me all but abhor."

"Montrecour! I shall pursue him through the world."

"No," said Clotilde; "he is as unworthy of your resentment as of my recollection. He is a traitor to his king, and a disgrace to his nobility. He is now a general in the Republican service, Citizen Montrecour. But we must talk of him no more."

She blushed deeply, and after some hesitation, said, "I am perfectly aware, that the marriages, customary among our noblesse, were too often contracted in the mere spirit of exclusiveness; and I own, that the proposal of my alliance with the Marquis de Montrecour was a family arrangement, perfectly in the spirit of other days. But, my residence in England changed my opinions on the custom of my country, and I determined—never to marry." She stopped short, and with a faint smile, said, "But let us talk of something else." Her cheek was crimson, and her eyes were fixed on the ground.

"No, Clotilde, talk of nothing else. Talk of your feelings, your sentiments, of yourself, and all that concerns yourself. No subject on earth can ever be so delightful to your friend. But, talk of what you will, and I shall listen with a pleasure which no human being has ever given me before, or ever shall give me again."

She raised her magnificent eyes, and fixed them full upon me with an involuntary look of surprise,

then grew suddenly pale, and closed them as if she felt sudden pain. "I must listen," said she, faintly, "to this language no longer. I know you to be above deception. I know you to be above playing with the vanity of one unused to praise, and to such praise. But I have a spirit as high as your own. Let us be friends. It will give an additional honour to my name; shall I say"—and she faltered—"an additional interest to my existence? But, now we must part, for a while."

"Never!" was my exclamation. "The world does not contain two Clotildes. And you shall never leave me. You have just told me, that I preserved your life. Why shall I not be its protector still? Why not be suffered to devote mine to making yours happy?" But, the bitter thought struck me, as I uttered the words—how far was I from the power of giving this incomparable creature the station in society which was hers by right! How feeble was my hope even of competence! How painfully should I look upon her beauty, her fine understanding, and her generous heart, humbled to the narrow circumstances of one, whose life depended upon the chances of the most precarious of all professions, and whose success in that profession depended wholly on the caprice of fortune. Again, one glance drove all doubts away, and I took her hand.

She looked at me with speechless embarrassment, sighed deeply, and a tear stole down her cheek. At length, withdrawing her hand, she said, in almost a whisper, and with an evident effort, "This must not be. I feel infinite honour in your good opinion—

deeply grateful for your kindness. But this must not be. Believe me ; I should rather wear this habit for life, than make so ungenerous a return to the noble spirit, that can thus offer its friendship to a stranger.”

“No, Clotilde, no. Again, in my turn, I say, this must not be ; you are *no* stranger. I know you at this hour, as well as if I had known you from the first hour of my being.—I gave my heart to you, from the moment when I first saw you among your countrywomen in England. It required no time, to make me feel that you were my fate. It was an instinct, a voice of nature, a voice of heaven within me.”

She listened and trembled. I again took the hand, which was withheld no more.—“From that day, Clotilde, you were my thought by day, and my dream by night.—All my desires of distinction were, that it might be seen by your eye ; all my hopes of fortune, that I might be enabled to lay it at your feet. If a throne were offered to me, on condition of renouncing you, I should have rejected it. If it were my lot to labour in the humblest rank of life : with *you* by my side, I should have cheerfully laboured ; and, with your hand in mine, I should have said, I have found what is worth the world—happiness !”

Tears flowed down her cheeks, which were now like marble. She feebly attempted to smile, while, with eyelids drooping, and her whole frame quivering with emotion, she murmured in broken accents, “It is impossible—utterly impossible ! Leave me. I must not bring you a portionless, a helpless, a nameless being—a dependent on your kindness, a burden on your fortune, an obstacle to your whole advance

in the world!" A rich flush suddenly lighted up her lovely countenance, and a new splendour flashed from her eyes. She threw back her head loftily, and, looking handsomer than ever, "No," said she, "I am as proud as you. I have had noble ancestors; I have borne a noble name. If that name has fallen, it is in the common wreck of my country. Our fortunes have sunk, only where our monarchy has gone down along with them; and I shall never degrade the memory of those ancestors, nor humiliate still more the fallen name of our house, by imposing my obscurity and poverty on one, who has honoured me as you have done. Now—farewell! My resolution is fixed. Farewell, my friend! I shall never forget this day." She turned away her face, and wept abundantly; then, fixing a long look on me, she added—"I own, that it would be a consolation to Clotilde de Tourville, to believe, that she may be sometimes remembered; but, until times change, we meet no more—if they change not, we now—part for ever."

I was so completely startled, so thunderstruck, by this declaration, that I could not utter a word. I stood gazing at her, with open lips. I felt a mist gathering over my eyes. I tottered to the sofa, and pressed my hand in pain upon my brow: when I withdrew it, I was alone—Clotilde was gone; she had vanished, with the silence of a vision.

I left the house immediately; and, in a state of mind which seemed like a dissolution of all my faculties. I could not speak, I could scarcely see, I could only gasp for air, and retain sufficient power over my limbs, to guide my steps to my melancholy dwelling. There

I threw myself on my rough bed, and lingered throughout the day in fiery feverishness of mind and body, which I sometimes thought to be the approach of death. How little could Clotilde have intended, that I should suffer thus for her high-toned delicacy! Still, in all my misery of soul, I did her justice. I remembered the countenance of melancholy beauty, with which she announced her final determination. The accents of her impassioned voice continually rose in my recollection, giving the deepest testimony to a heart struggling at once with affection and a sense of duty. In my wildest reveries during that day and night of wretchedness, I felt that, if she could have spared me a single pang, she would have rejoiced to cheer, to console, to tranquillize me.—Those were strange feelings for a rejected lover, but they were instinctively mine. There was so lofty a spirit in her glance, so true a sincerity in her language, so pure and transparent a truth in her sighs, and smiles, and involuntary tears; that I acquitted her, from my soul, of all attempts to try, or to triumph over, my devotion to her.

More than once, during that night of anguish, I imagined the scene of the day to be actually passing again before my eyes. I saw her sorrows, and vainly endeavoured to subdue them; I heard her convulsive tones, and attempted to calm them; I reasoned with her, talked of our common helplessness, acknowledged the dignity and the delicacy of her conduct, and even gave her lip the kiss of peace and sorrow, as I bade her farewell. Deep but exquisite illusion! which I cherished, and loved to renew; until, sud-

denly aroused by some changing of the sentinels, or passing of the attendants, I looked round; and saw nothing but the gloomy roof, the old flickering of the huge lantern hanging from the centre of the hall, and the beds where so many had slept their last, and which so many of the sleepers were never to leave with life.—I then had the true experience of human passion. Love, in the light and gay, may be as sportive as themselves; in the calm and grave, it may be firm and deep; but in some, it is strong as tempest, and consuming as flame.

I should probably have closed my days in that place of all afflicting sights and sounds, but for my good old nurse. On her first visit at dawn, she lectured me prodigiously, on the folly of exposing myself to the hazards of the night air: of which she evidently thought much more than of the Austrian cannon-balls. “They might shower them upon the buildings as they pleased, but,” said the Béguine, “if they kill, their business is done.—It is *your* cold, your damp, your night-air, that carries off, without letting any one know how,” the perplexity of science on the subject plainly forming the chief evil in poor Juliet’s calculation.

“See my own condition,” said she, striving to bring her memory in aid of her advice. “At fifteen I was a barmaid at the Swartz Adler; there I ran in and out, danced at all the family *fêtes*, and was as gay as a bird on the tree.—But that life was too good to last. At twenty, a corporal of Prussian dragoons fell in love with me, or I with him; it is all the same. His regiment was ordered to Silesia, and

away we marched. But, if ever there was a country of fogs, that was the one. There are, now and then, a few, even in our delightful France; but, in Silesia, they have a patent for them, they have them *par privilège*; if men could eat them, there would never be a chance of starving, in Silesia. So, we all got sore throats. Cannon and musketry were nothing to them. Our dragoons dropped off, like flies at the end of summer; and unless we had been ordered away, to keep the Turks from marching to Berlin, or the saints know where; the regiment would have had its last quarters in this world, within a league of the marshes of Breslau. So I say ever since; take care of damp."

Having thus relieved her good-natured spirit of its burden, she proceeded to give me snatches of her history.—The corporal had fallen a victim; though whether to Silesian fog, brandy, or the bullet, she left doubtful; and she had married his successor in the rank. Love and matrimony in the army are of a different order from either in civil life; for the love is perpetual, the matrimony precarious. Juliet acknowledged, that she never left above a month's interval between her afflictions as a widow, and her consolations as a wife. In the course of time she changed her service. A handsome Austrian sergeant won her heart and hand, and she followed him into Hungary. There, between marsh fever and Turkish skirmishing, various casualties occurred in the matrimonial list; and Juliet, who evidently had been a handsome brunette, and whose French vivacity distanced all the heavy charms of the Austrian pea-

sant belles, was never without a husband. At length, like other veterans, having served her country to the full extent of her patriotism; she was discharged, with her tenth husband; and, of course, induced the honest Austrian to come to the only country on which, in a Frenchwoman's creed, the sun shines. There the Austrian died.

"I loved him," said the Béguine, wiping her eyes. "He was an excellent fellow, though dull; and I believe, next to smoking and schnaps, he loved me better than anything else in the world. But, on his emperor's birth-day, which he always kept with a bottle of brandy additional, he rambled out into the fog, and came back with a cold.—*Peste!* I knew, that it was all over with him; but I nursed him like a babe, and he died, like a true Austrian, with his meerschäum in his mouth; bequeathing me his snuff-box, the certificate of his pension, and his blessing.—I buried him, got pensioned, and was broken-hearted. But, what, then, was to be done? I was born for society. I once or twice thought of an eleventh husband; but I was now rich. I had above a thousand francs, and a pension of a hundred; this perplexed me. I was determined to be married for myself alone. Yet, how could I know, whether the hypocrites who clustered round me, were not thinking of my money all the while? So, I determined to marry no more; and became a Béguine."

In all my vexation, I could not help turning my eyes upon the sentimentalist. She interpreted it in the happy way of her country. "You wonder at

my self-denial," said she; "I perceive it in your astonishment. I was *but* fifty then. Yes," said she, clasping her hands and looking pathetic; "I acknowledge that it *was* cruel. What right had I to break so many hearts? I have much to answer for—and I *but* fifty! I am even now but fifty-six. Yet, observe, I have taken no vows; remark *that*, Monsieur le Capitaine. At this moment I am only a *Sœur de Charité*. No, nothing shall ever induce me to make, or keep the vows. I am free to marry to-morrow; and I only beg, Monsieur le Capitaine, that when you are well enough to go abroad again, whether in the town or in the country, or in whatever part of Europe you may travel, you will have the kindness to state positively, most positively, that Juliet Donnertronk, *née* Ventrebleu, has not taken, and never will take, any vows whatever!"

"Not even those of marriage, Juliet?" asked I.

She laughed, and patted my burning head, with "*Ah, vous êtes bien bon! Ah, moqueur Anglais!*" finishing with all the pantomime of blushing confusion, and starting away like a fluttered pigeon.

As soon as I felt able to move, which was not till some days after; my first effort was to reach the mansion in which Clotilde resided. But, there I received the startling intelligence, that on the evening of the day of my first and last visit, she had left the town with the superior of the convent. She had made such urgent entreaties to the governor, to be permitted to leave Valenciennes, that he had obtained a passport for her from the general commanding the

trenches; and not only for her, but also for the nuns; the burning of whose convent had left them houseless.

Painful as it was thus to lose her, it was, on consideration, a relief, to find that she was under the protection of her relative; and when I saw, from day to day, the ravage that was committed by the tremendous weight of fire, I rejoiced that she was no longer exposed to its perils.

But it was my fate, or perhaps my good fortune, never to be suffered to brood long over my own calamities. My life has been spent in the midst of tumults, which, if they did not extinguish—and what could extinguish?—the sense of my mental trials, at least prevented the echo of my complaints from returning to my ears. Before the midnight, of the very day in which I had lost the only being, for whom I now lived; the whole city was alarmed by the intelligence, that the besiegers were evidently preparing for an assault. I listened undisturbed. Even this could scarcely add to the horrors in which the inhabitants lived from hour to hour; and to me it was the hope of a rescue; unless I should be struck by some of the shells, which now were perpetually bursting in the streets, or should even fall a victim to the wrath of the incensed garrison.

But, an order came suddenly to the engineer, in command of the quarter, to send all the patients into the vaults, and throw all the beds on the roof, to deaden the weight of the fire. He was a man of gentlemanlike manners, and had been attentive to me, in the shape of many of those minor civilities

which a man of severe authority might have refused, but which mark kindness of disposition. On this night he told me, that he had orders to put all the prisoners in arrest; but that, regarding me more as a friend than a prisoner; I was at liberty to take any precaution for my security which I thought proper. My answer was, "that I hoped, at all events, not to be shut into the vaults, but, to take my chance above ground." To compromise the difficulty, I proposed to assist in carrying the mattresses to the roof, and to remain there until the night was over. "But you may be hit," said my friend. "So be it," was my answer. "It is the natural fate of my profession; but, at least, I shall not be buried alive."

"It will be soon over with us all, and with Valenciennes," said the officer; "though whether to-night or not, is a question. We have seen new batteries raised, within the last twenty-four hours. The enemy have now nearly three hundred heavy guns in full play; and, to judge from the quantity of shells, they must have a hundred mortars besides. No fortress can stand this; and, if it continues, we shall soon be ground into dust." He took his leave; and, with my mattress on my shoulder, I mounted the numberless and creaking staircases, until the door of the roof and the landscape opened on me together; never was a landscape less tempting.

The night was excessively dark, but perfectly calm; and, except where the fire from the batteries marked their position, all objects beyond the ramparts were nearly invisible. The town around me lay silent,

and looking more like a vast grave, than a place of human existence. Now and then, the light of a lantern gliding along the ruined streets, showed me a group of wretched beings hurrying a corpse to the next churchyard; or a priest seeking his way over the smoking ruins, to attend some dying soldier or citizen. All was utter desolation.

But a new scene—a terrible and yet a superb one—suddenly broke upon me. A gleam of lights from various points of the allied lines, showed that a general movement was begun. The batteries now opened along the whole extent of the trenches, and by their blaze I was able to discern, formed in their rear, and advancing, two immense columns, which, however, in the distance and the fitfulness of the glare, looked more like huge clouds than living beings. The guns of the ramparts soon replied, and the roar was deafening; while the plunging of shot along the ramparts and roofs made our situation perilous in no slight degree. But, in the midst of this hurricane of fire, I saw a single rocket shoot up from the camp, and the whole range of the batteries ceased at the instant. The completeness of the cessation was scarcely less appalling than the roar.

While every telescope was instantly turned to the spot, where the columns and batteries seemed to have sunk together into the earth; a pyramid of blasting flame burst up to the very clouds, carrying with it huge fragments of beams and masonry. The explosion rent the air, and shook the building on which I stood,

as if it had been a house of sand. A crowd of engineer and staff officers now rushed on the roof, and their alarm at the results of the concussion was undisguised. "This is what we suspected," said the chief to me; "but it was impossible to discover where the gallery of their mine was run. Our counter-mine has clearly failed." He had scarcely spoken the words, before a second and still broader explosion tore up the ground to a great extent, and threw the counterscarp for several hundred yards into the ditch. The drums of the columns were now distinctly heard, beating the "advance;" but darkness had again fallen, and all was invisible. A third explosion followed, still closer to the ramparts, which blew up the face of the grand bastion. The stormers now gave a general shout, and I saw them gallantly dashing across the ditch and covered way, tearing down the palisades, fighting hand to hand, clearing the out-works with the bayonet, and finally making a lodgement on the bastion itself. The red-coats, which now swarmed through the works, and the colours planted on the rampart, showed me that my countrymen had led the assault, and my heart throbbed with envy and admiration. "Why am I not there?" was my involuntary cry; as I almost wished that some of the shots, which were now flying about the roofs, would relieve me from the shame of being a helpless spectator. "*Mon ami*," said the voice of the brave and good-natured Frenchman, who had overheard me—"if you wish to rejoin your regiment, you will not have long to wait.—Yet, this affair will not be

decided to-night, as I thought that it would, half an hour ago. I see that they have done as much as they intended for the time, and mean to leave the rest to fright and famine. To-morrow will tell us something.—Pack up your valise. *Bon soir!*”

CHAPTER XXXII.

“ He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a-tiptoe, when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name :
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on this vigil feast his friends.
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.
Old men forget ; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember, with advantages,
What feats he did that day.”

SHAKSPEARE.

VALENCIENNES was now captured. The sagacity of my friend, the French engineer, had not been deceived. The explosion of the three great mines ; an operation, from its magnitude, almost new to war, and in its effects irresistible, had thrown open the fortress. The garrison had done their duty gallantly, and the result was a capitulation, hastened by the outcry of the famishing inhabitants. I hastened to the quarters of my regiment, was received with all cordiality ; and had the honour of an interview with the royal duke, who, at all times affable, was now in peculiar good-humour, and who led me into a long detail of such public matters as might be

gathered from my intercourse with the garrison. At the close of our interview he gave me a note, which was to be forwarded to the adjutant-general. I made my bow, and retired.

All in the camp was now festivity. A great achievement had been accomplished, and the barriers of France were broken down. Yet, in the midst of national triumph, I felt a depression which rendered me almost incapable of sharing it. The wounds of the spirit are not to be healed like those of the frame; and with the recollection of the noble creature whom I had lost, bitterness mingled in every sound, and sight, and exultation. My first request would have been, for leave of absence; that I might follow her, if she were still in France, or in the world. But the bustle at head-quarters told me that some movement was about to take place; and, under those circumstances, a request for leave was impossible. Still I continued, making every imaginable enquiry, dispatching letters, and seeing postmasters, to obtain intelligence of the route which Clotilde had taken. But, after tracing her for the first few leagues, all tidings were lost; and I had only to trust to that hope which was a part of my sanguine nature, and which was sustained, by a kind of consciousness, that a being so superior could not be flung away in the chances which visit the multitude.

While I was thus pondering and perplexed, I was summoned to attend one of the principal officers of the staff. "We are sending despatches of some importance to London," said he, "and it is the wish of the commander-in-chief, that you should be their

bearer. I have the pleasure to tell you, that he feels an interest in you, from the opportunities which you have had of distinguishing yourself in the campaign ; and that he has appointed you one of his extra aides-de-camp.—Your service begins soon,” added my informant with a smile, “for you must set off to-night. The despatch announcing the capitulation of the fortress was, of course, sent at once ; but as the statement, in those cases, is necessarily brief, it is always desirable to have some one in London, capable of explaining the ‘explanation,’ or, on emergency, taking the place of the personage who has been made the official bearer of the despatch. His royal highness is satisfied, from his conversation with you, that you will be perfectly fit for this purpose ; and here is the letter ; with which you are to make all expedition to the Horse Guards.”

After making my preparations for the journey, I hastened to take leave of the man whom I most honoured and esteemed, my unfailing friend Guiscard. To my surprise, he received the intelligence of my appointment with scarcely a word of congratulation. Little as I myself was now excitable by any thing in the shape of human fortune, I was chagrined by his obstinate gravity. He observed it, and started from his seat. “Come,” said he, “let us take a walk, and get out of the sight of mankind, if we can.” He took my arm, and we strayed along the banks of the Scheldt ; where, however, his purpose was unattainable, for the whole breadth of the river was covered with the provision barges of the troops. The barge-men were enjoying the fine July evening, in the

national style—swilling the worst beer that ever punished the taste for that barbarian beverage, and filling the fresh breeze with the fumes of tobacco, worthy of the beer. Guiscard stopped to gaze at them.

“I envy those fellows,” said he, “not merely for their escaping all care, and being able to extract enjoyment out of their execrable drink and pipes, but from their being exempt from all contact with portfolios.”

“But such enjoyment is only that of the swine.”

“Well, and is not that of the swine perfect?—and what would you have more than perfection?”

A huge herd of those creatures, coming along the miry edge of the river, helped his illustration. “Mr. Marston, you have not been for the last month on the staff of the commander-in-chief of the allied armies, or you would not look so incredulous. Sir, I allow, that man’s senses may be as suitable for his purposes, as those of the animals which we see wallowing there.” I stared, waiting for the conclusion. He proceeded. “But man has drawbacks on his natural faculties, which they have not. Nature possibly intended, that we should be as happy as they. But, make nine-tenths of them hewers of wood and drawers of water, send some of them to dungeons, enforce a conscription among the rest, and order them to use their tusks upon each other; and the most complacent of them would rebel: or, as the last trial of temper, put the meekest of the race into a cabinet of princes and general-officers, themselves controlled by a cabinet five hundred miles off; and if they do not growl

as I do now, I shall give up all my knowledge of quadruped nature."

"Why, Guiscard, what is the matter with you to-night? Have we not gained our point? You are like the Thracians, who always mourned at the birth of a child."

"And the Thracians were perfectly right, if the child were to be reared a diplomatist. You talk of success!" Our path had led to where a view of Valenciennes opened on us through the trees; and its shattered ramparts and curtains, the trees felled along its glacis, and its bastions stripped and broken by our cannon-balls, certainly presented a rueful spectacle. The Austrian flag was flying on the citadel.

"There," said he, "is our prize. It is not worth the loading of a single gun; but it has cost us more millions to ruin, than it took francs to build—it has cost us the conquest of France; and will cost Europe the war, which we might have extinguished three months ago, if we had but left it behind. I acknowledge, that I speak in the bitterness of my heart; delay has ruined every thing. Our march to Paris, and our march to Georgium Sidus, will now be finished on the same day."

I attempted to laugh off his predictions, but he was intractable. "The business," said he, "is over. That flag is the signal of European jealousy and the pledge of French triumph. You are going to England; and if you have any regard for my opinion, tell your friends there, to withdraw their troops as soon as they can. That flag, which pretends to partition

France, will unite it as one man. Our sages here are actually about to play its game.—Orders have come, to divide the army. What folly! What inconceivable infatuation! In the very face of the most fantastic and most furious population of mankind, a race whom the most trivial success inflames into enthusiasts; they are going to break up their force, and seek adventures, by brigades and battalions.”

He stamped on the ground with indignation; but, suddenly recovering his calmness, he turned to me with his grave smile. “I am ashamed, Marston, of thus betraying a temper, which time ought to have cooled. But, after all, what is public life but a burlesque; a tissue of ludicrous disappointments; a tragedy, with a farce always at hand, to relieve the tedium and the tinsel; the fall of kingdoms made laughable by the copper lace of the stage wardrobe?”

“Do you object to our Duke?”

“Not in the least. He is personally a gallant fellow; and if he wants experience, so does every man, at one time or other. His only error, hitherto, has been his condescending to come at all, with so small a force under his command. No English army should ever plant its foot upon the Continent, with less than fifty thousand men on its muster-roll. The duke’s being put at the head of your troops—only a division after all—seems to me the only wise thing that has been done. It was a declaration of the heartiness of your alliance; and I honour your country for the distinctness of the avowal. Your king gives his son, as your country gives her soldiers, and your people give their money. The whole was

manly, magnanimous, or, as the highest panegyric, it was English all over."

This language at once put an end to all my reserve. I shook his hand in the spirit of old friendship; and, on our parting, extracted a promise of keeping up our communication on all possible opportunities. We had already separated, when I heard my name called again, and Guiseard returned. "I had forgotten," said he, "to tell you, what I was most anxious to say. If I had seen no other prospect for you, I should be the last man to make you discontented with your profession. My only request now is, that when you once more tread on English ground you will seriously consider, whether you will continue in the army. If I know you at all, I think that you would not be altogether satisfied with wearing your epaulettes at reviews and parades. And, if I am not entirely mistaken, you will have nothing else to do, for the next dozen years.—Your army are moving homewards already. You are now in the secret."

"But, is the campaign absolutely coming to an end? Are the hopes of attacking the French so suddenly given up? Is France always to baffle us?" was my vexed question.

"As to the fate of France, you should consult a prophet, not a Prussian engineer—and one terribly tired of his trade besides," was the reply. We parted; but the conversation was not lost upon me.

By midnight I was on my journey. My rout lay through the Flemish provinces, which had now recovered all their luxuriance, if not derived additional animation from the activity which every where fol-

lows the movements of a successful army. Troops marching to join the general advance frequently and strikingly diversified the scene. Huge trains of the commissariat were continually on the road. The little civic authorities were doubly conscious of the dignity of functions which brought them into contact with soldiership, from the quartermaster up to the general. But the contrast of the tumult which I left behind, with the quietness of the scenes around me—the haste, the anxiety, and the restlessness of a huge camp, with the calm of the fields, with the regularity which seemed to govern all the operations of farming life, and with the grave opulence of the old mansions, which seemed to be formed for the natural receptacles of the wealth of Flemish fields; at once refreshed me, after the mental fever in which I had tossed so long, and perhaps impressed on me more deeply the parting advice of my friend the philosopher.

But, from the moment when I touched British ground, the whole sleepy tranquillity which gathers over every sense in the quietude of Flanders; where the same man seems to have followed the same plough, from the deluge, had utterly vanished. I was in the midst of a nation in a ferment. The war was the universal topic; party was in full life; from the inn at Dover, up to the waiting-room at the Horse-Guards, I heard nothing but politics.—The conduct of our army—the absurdity of every thing that had been done, or left undone—the failures of the Allies—the fanaticism of the French—the hopes of popular liberty on one side, and the indignation of established

power on the other—came echoing and re-echoing in a clamour of discordant conceptions, that for the time bewildered me. How simple was the gossip of the camp to this heterogeneous mass of struggling topics! How straightforward was even the wild haranguing of the Palais Royal, to the thousand reports and protests, remonstrances and replications, of the whole ringing and raging public mind of England! This was the age of pamphleteering. Every sage who could, or could not, write, flung his pamphlet in the teeth of the party whose existence he conceived to be ruinous to his country—or perhaps prejudicial to his own prospect of a sinecure. The journals printed their columns in gall; the satirists dipped their pens in concentrated acid; the popular haranguers dashed the oil of vitriol of contempt in each other's faces. The confusion, the collision, the uproar, was indescribable.

But my whole experience of public life has told me, that however the popular opinion may be wrong, the public opinion is right; and I felt that the nation was already adverse to the conduct of the campaign. The utmost skill of the cabinet was required, to prevent a dangerous reaction. The member of administration with whom my chief intercourse now officially existed, was the same manly and kind-natured individual to whom I had formerly been indebted for so much civility; and, as if proud of his own work, his official civility now took the form of friendship. Ill news came from abroad; and I expressed my impatience of remaining with the pen in my hand, when I should have worn my sword. To all my suggestions on the subject,

the good-humoured answer was, "that my services were still necessary at home." At length, on my making a decided request, that I should be permitted to return to my regiment; he told me in confidence, that the campaign was probably at an end; that the British commander-in-chief was about to return; and that, in fact, the strength of England would be turned to the naval war. At the close of one of those conversations, fixing his keen grey eye upon me, he said, "Pray, what think you of Parliament?" My answer was, "That mediocrity was more contemptible there, than any where else; while success was more difficult."

"Oh, you mean such success as Pitt's: you mean triumph. But you must get those Greek and Roman notions out of your head. An English House does not want orators. One on a side is quite enough. They are like the gold plate on a sideboard; it is well to show that we have such things, for the honour of our establishment; but no one thinks of making every day use of them at table—Pitt is an exception; he is equal to every thing; an incomparable man of business. Burke, or some other man of metaphor, compared him justly to the falcon; which, however high it may soar, always follows the prey with its eye along the ground. But, two Pitts, if nature could be prolific of such magnificent monsters, would absolutely perplex us. What could be more confusing than to have two suns shining at the same time?"

"But is Fox nothing?" I asked.

"A great deal," was the answer. "He is the finest

talker, I suppose, in the world.—The first of babblers.”

“Of babblers!” I repeated, in surprise!

“Yes; for what is babbling, but speaking in vain; pouring out endless speculations without a purpose, or the hope of a purpose; indulging a remarkably powerful and productive mind with the waste of its own conceptions; lavishing a whole coinage of splendid thoughts, with no more expectancy of a practical result, than if he flung the mint into the Thames? You may rely upon it, that such is the opinion of the House, as it will be yours when you get there; and such will be that of posterity, if they shall ever take the trouble to think about any of us.”

This conversation was evidently more than accidental; and I gave to it some of my most perplexing hours. I had an original fondness for the life of arms. I was of the age to feel its variety, animation, and ardour. My experience had been fortunate; I had seen nothing but victory, and had been flattered by personal distinctions. But, then came the reverse of the medal. I remembered the opinion of the most sagacious and penetrating spirit, which it had been my lot ever to know; and I felt that the Continent was to be our field of battle no longer. The languor of home service, to one who had seen war in its state-liest shape, and in its most powerful activity; rose before my mind with an inexpressible sense of weariness. On the other hand, supposing that I possessed the faculties for political life, was I possessed of the temper, had I the endurance of toil, the measureless

patience, the inexhaustible equanimity, which every night of my public existence would henceforth demand? or, why was this heart-wearying struggle to be preferred to the simple and straightforward pursuit of an honourable profession, in which the only burden was my sword, and the only secret of distinction an untarnished name?

But, I soon made up my mind. The question narrowed itself to this: which was the more active life? The point of honour was no longer in the adherence to a profession, whose purposes were necessarily changed. Every hour gave additional evidence, that the gates of the Continent were closing upon the English soldier. On the other hand, influence, impression, publicity, were the prizes of a political career. I saw all other names fade before the great senatorial names of England. I heard men of humble extraction among them, filling the world with their fame. I saw a succession of individuals, who, if their profession had been arms, or if their birth-place had been the Continent, must have lived and died in the routine of obscure service; here rising to the height of national homage, lights of their generation, and guiding by their opinions the opinion of mankind.

Whether I should ever take my place among those illustrious names, scarcely entered into my thoughts. But, I was determined, never to waste my life in conscious indolence. Scarcely knowing what faculties I might possess, I fully resolved on trying their utmost strength; and grown almost indifferent to the ordinary pursuits of human ambition; I looked with something of a melancholy, yet proud hope, to the

enjoyment, which was to be found, in giving myself up to the solitary and stern toil of living for a great cause, and leaving a name behind me, that should not be forgotten.

On that very day, the intelligence arrived, that the British troops had marched for the north of Germany; that the royal duke was on his way to England; and that the Allies, by common consent, had abandoned the invasion of France. My habits were always prompt. Before the hour was over, in which the gazette appeared, I waited on my ministerial friend, and expressed my full acquiescence in his proposal.

I pass by the process of getting into Parliament; it was then a simpler matter than it has since become. A treasury borough was the gate through which all the leading names of the country had entered the legislature, and I merely followed the path of all, but the lords of the soil.

Every man who will make himself master of an occupation must serve an apprenticeship. Parliament, too, has its seven years' indentures, and the few who have refused the training, have seldom been the wiser for their precipitancy. I "bided my time," taking a slight occasional share in those debates with whose topics I happened to be well acquainted; and expecting the chances, which, to every one who employs himself vigorously, are all but certainties. Still, I felt that this mere hovering on the outskirts of debate must not last too long, and that nothing was more hazardous to a reputation, than to be too slow in attempting to lay its first stone. Yet, I felt some

difficulty, on every great question ; and, after bracing my nerves for the onset, I always found my courage fail at the sight of the actual encounter. I felt, as a young knight might have felt in some of the tilting matches of old—master of his charger in the open field, and delighting in the pressure of his armour and the weight of his lance ; but, when he once rode within the barrier, saw the galleries filled, and the heralds lifting the trumpets to their lips, feeling his blood grow chill, and the light depart from his eyes.

I mentioned this embarrassment to my Scottish friend, and almost expected a remonstrance. To my great surprise and greater pleasure, he congratulated me. “ You cannot give a better sign,” said he. “ My only fear of you was, that you would dash into debate at once, like a man jumping from a precipice ; and that, like him, all that you would have gained by it, would be broken limbs for life.”

“ But, what is to be done in the House without some hazard of the kind ? ”

“ Wrong—quite wrong. A great deal is to be done. Take myself for the example. You see *where* I am, and yet I never made a *speech* in my life. From the beginning of my career, I never allowed any one to look for any thing of the kind from me ; and the consequence was, that by some I was regarded as a much shrewder personage than I ever believed myself to be ; and by others was thought to know a great deal more, than I ever acquired.”

“ But, will this account for the rapid distinctions of your public life ? ”

“ Perfectly, so far as they have gone. I obtained

ministerial confidence, on the essential merit of being a safe man—one who made no intriguing attempts to lower the crests of those above me. I escaped the jealousy of those below me, by adopting the moderation which mediocrity assumes by nature. I was thus, like the senior subaltern in a marching regiment—I wore the same uniform with the colonel, and went through the same exercise with the ensign. The field-officers knew that I would not tread upon their heels; and every subaltern wished to see my promotion, as a step to his own.”

“This was the feeling of an honourable mind. Yet this was but manner after all,” said I.

“Well, what is life but manner?” he replied with a smile. “But I had another quality—‘Diligence.’ The two carry every thing, in time.”

My official duties, the mere entrance into office, occupied me laboriously for awhile; and I felt all the habitual difficulties of my noviciate. It had been fully my intention, to follow the advice of my experienced friend, and leave the hour which was to call for my exertions in the House to the chances of the time. But that time came more rapidly than I had expected. The public mind was fevered, hour by hour; the news from the Continent was more and more startling; the successes of the Republican armies had assumed a shape, which our desponding politicians regarded as invincibility, and which our factious ones pronounced to be the ruin of Europe. The cabinet itself saw only the prospect of a melancholy struggle. But six months before, it had stood, strong as a citadel erected by the national hands,

and garrisoned by the spirit of the empire. It still stood, but it stood dismantled; there were evident breaches in its walls, and the fugitives of Opposition, rallying with the hope of success, advanced again to the storm, headed by their great leader, and sustained by the capricious and fluctuating multitude. The premier was harassed by the incessant toil of defence—a toil in which he had scarcely a sharer, and which exposed him to the most remorseless hostility.

Yet, if the historian were to choose the moment for his true fame, this was the one which ought to be chosen. He rose, with the severity of the struggle; assault seemed to give him new vigour; the attempt to tear the robe of office from his shoulders only gave the nobler display of his intellectual proportions. When I saw him, night after night, standing almost alone, with nothing but disaster in front and timidity in the rear, combating a force such as had never before been arrayed under the banners of Opposition; the whole scene of magnificent conflict and still grander fortitude, reminded me of the Homeric war and its warriors.—The champion of the kingdom, standing forth, in despite of evil omens thickening round him, defying not man alone, but the deepening cloud, and the sinister thunders.

I speak of those times, and of the great men of those times, in no invidious contrast with later days. I have so strong a faith in the intellectual vigour, which freedom gives to a great empire, that I am convinced of our being able, in all its eras, to find the express

species of public talent essential to its services. I regard the national mind, as the philosopher does the natural soil, always capable of the essential produce, where we give it the due tillage. The great men of the past century passed away along with it; they were summoned for a day of gigantic conflict, and were formed for that conflict; their muscular vigour, the power with which they wielded their weapons, the giant step and the giant hand, were all necessary, and were all shaped, and sustained, by that necessity. But their day had its close; the leaders of man—like the “mighty hunters” of an age, when the land was still overshadowed with the forest, and the harvest was overrun with the lion and the panther; would naturally give place to a less daring and lofty generation, when the forest had given way to the field, and the lair of the wild beast had become the highway and the bower.

But if the evil day should again return; the guardian power of intellect and virtue will again come forth in the human shape, and vindicate the providence that watches over the progress of mankind. I utterly deny the exhaustion of national genius; I even deny its exhaustibility. If the moral vegetation languishes, and the soil is parched, for awhile; the great source of refreshing and fertility still lies before us—the public mind, in its boundless expansion, and in its unfathomable depth; the intellectual ocean, which no plummet has ever sounded, and which no shore has ever circumscribed; ready to restore the balance of nature.

But, the sense of power itself in the national

mind, forbids the exhibition of its strength, in tranquil times. It is lofty and fastidious; it will not stoop to a contest in which there is nothing to be contended for. It is not an actor; and it cannot adopt the figured passion of the actor, rend its robe, and flourish, and obtest heaven against the traitor and the oppressor, to the sound of an orchestra, or in the glitter of stage lamps. The true ability of the empire must scorn all mimic encounter; and what else can be the little struggles of party shut up in the legislature, whose sound scarcely transpires through the walls, whose triumphs are a tax, and whose oracles are an intrigue? But, when the true day of trial shall come—when an enemy shall be seen hovering on the coasts of the Constitution—when trumpet answers trumpet, and national freedom is proclaimed “in danger;” then, and not till then, shall we know the superb resources of our intellectual strength: whatever may have been the prowess of the past, we may see it not merely rivalled, but thrown into eclipse by the future; the burnished armour, and massive swords and maces of our old intellectual chivalry, superseded only by more manageable and more irresistible implements of success; and the sterner conflict only followed by the more consummate triumph.

Yet, it is curious, that when we undervalue the living ability of the nation, from its momentary quietude; we but adopt the example of every past age, in succession. The last ten years of the last century were preceded by a period of despair;—Chatham’s career was run, and the national regrets over his

tomb were mingled with sorrows for the extinction of all parliamentary fame!—"The day had gone down, and darkness was to cover the sky for ever." But, the prediction was scarcely uttered, when the horizon was in a blaze; mighty meteors rushed across it in a thousand courses of eccentric speed and splendour; and a period of intellectual display began, which once more cheered, and dazzled, the empire.

Anne's Augustan age of war, negotiation, and eloquence, was once pronounced to be, like the Augustan age of Rome, incapable of rivalship by posterity. Yet, our own times have seen a bolder war, a broader peace, and a richer development of science, invention, and eloquence. For fifty years, England was pronounced, to have worn herself out, by the prolific brilliancy of the half century before; like a precocious infant, to have anticipated her powers, and ensured their premature decay; or, like the Bœotians, to have had her Pindaric period, and be thenceforward doomed to pay for her rapture and renown by perpetual darkness. England seemed, like the Israelites in Egypt, to be sunk into an intellectual slave-caste;—when, in the midst of the scoffing, and the sorrow, suddenly arrived a new epoch, a new summons to the national genius, a new time of lofty interpositions, "thunderings in the air, and lightning running along the ground," an era of marvellous things; and the generation went forth, with a new sense of superiority, into new scenes of knowledge, discovery, and empire.

Whether it was my good or ill fortune, to make my first effort, in the midst of the men whose

names immortalized their day, I shall not venture to decide. But, my resolve had been firmly taken—not to remain in Parliament, unless I discovered in myself faculties fit for its service. I was determined, not to play the mute, if I had the means of uttering a voice. But, now the whole force of administration was demanded ; and I made up my mind to ascertain by trial, what no man can be sure of without that trial, whether I possessed any capacity for a life of public service, or was entitled to form a hope of personal distinction.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“ Order is Heaven’s first law, and this confess,
Some are, and must be greater than the rest,
More rich, more wise ; but who infers from hence
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.
Condition, circumstance, is not the thing,
Bliss is the same in subject and in king.
Heaven breathes through every member of the whole,
One common blessing, as one common soul ;
But fortune’s gifts, if each alike possessed,
And each were equal, must not all contest ?”

POPE.

THE subject on which I first spoke, was an address to the throne, in answer to the King’s message on the war. On this night Pitt, but lately recovered from a fit of his hereditary gout, spoke briefly, and with evident feebleness of frame. Fox, whose energy seemed always to depend on his rival’s power, and whose eloquence always rose or fell with the vigour or languor of the minister—Fox, never so great as when Pitt put forth all his strength, on this night idled away the hour, through the mere want of an antagonist ; but Sheridan made ample compensation for his leader. The House had fallen

into lassitude, and the benches were already thin, when he arose. I had heard him as the humorist, on some trivial occasions of debate. I had often enjoyed the social pleasantry, which placed him at the head of the wits ; but I was still but imperfectly acquainted with the strong sarcasm, the deep disdain, and the grave sophistry, which this extraordinary man could exhibit with such redundant ease, and wield with such practised dexterity. I must give but an outline of a noble picture.

“You have made war,” said he, “and you have made the arms of your country contemptible by failures, which you rendered inevitable by your rashness. You, sir,” and he fixed his flashing eye on the premier, “have commenced that war by a series of declarations, which made our diplomacy as contemptible as our campaigns. The national sword has been wrested from our hands. But you were not content with that humiliation, and you added to it the disgrace of the national understanding. You laid down a succession of principles, and then trampled them in the dust on the first opportunity. You encumbered yourself for action with pledges which you could never have intended to sustain, or which in the first collision your pusillanimity threw away. Yet I deprecate the perfidy of those measures, even more than I despise their weakness. I can comprehend the effrontery of aggression ; but I scorn the meanness of intrigue. I may face the soldier, but I shudder at the assassin. I may determine to hunt down and destroy the lion, but I disdain the trap and the pitfall. And what has been the pretext

of his majesty's ministers? Moderation. In this spirit of moderation they invaded France; in this spirit of moderation they captured her fortresses, and then handed them over to the Emperor; in this spirit of moderation they denounced the men who had given France a constitution; and in this spirit of moderation you now prepare to rebuild her Bastille, to restore her scaffolds, to reforge her chains, and summon all the kings of Europe, instead of taking a salutary lesson from the tomb of the monarchy, to see its skeleton exhumed, and placed, robed and crowned, upon the throne; with the nation forced to offer homage, at once in mockery and terror, to the grinning emblem; in which, with all your philtres, you can never put life again."

The orator then gave a general and singularly imposing view of the state of our European connexions; which he described as utterly frail, the result of interested motives, and sure to be broken up at the first temptation. But the "first lord of the treasury and chancellor of his majesty's exchequer," said he, "smiles at my alarm; he has his security at his side—he has the purse, which commands all the baser portion of our nature with such irresistible control! On one point I fully agree with the right honourable gentleman—that nothing but the purse could ever keep them faithful. Yet, is there nothing but gold, that can bribe? is there no bribe in territory? will he not find, when he hurries to the purchase of allies with the millions of the treasury in his hand, that more powerful purchasers have been there before him? When he

offers the loan, will he not find them offering the province? when he bids with the subsidy, will he not be outbid with the kingdom? Or, if the anticipated conquerors of Europe, raising their sense of dignity to the level of their power, should disdain the traffic of corruption; will not the roaring of the French cannon in the ears of kings make them feel, that, to persist in your ill-omened alliance, is to devote themselves to ruin? will they bargain, in sight of the axe? will they dare to traffic in the blood of their people, with the grave dug at their feet? will they be dazzled by your gold, while the French bayonet is startling their eyes? Within ten years, if England exists, she will be without an ally on earth; or, if she continues to fight, it will be in loneliness, in terror, and in despair."

In this strain he poured out his daring conceptions for more than two hours, during which he kept the whole audience in the deepest attention. He concluded in an uproar of plaudits from both sides of the House.

My time now came. And the rising of a new member, always regarded with a generous spirit of courtesy, produced some additional interest, from the knowledge of my services on the Continent, and my immediate connexion with the ministry. The House, which had filled to overflowing in the course of Sheridan's incomparable speech, was now hushed in the most total silence, and every eye was turned on me. I shall say nothing of my perturbation, further than that I had stood before an enemy's line of ten thousand men, with their muskets levelled within half a

hundred yards of me; and that I thought the benches of the House of Commons on that night looked much the more formidable of the two. I thought that the ground was shaking under my feet, and I could have almost rejoiced to have sunk into it, from the gaze, and the silence, which equally appalled me. While I attempted to mutter a few sentences, of which I felt the sound die within my lips; my eye was caught by the quick turn of Pitt's head, who fixed his impatient glance upon me. Fox, with that kindness of heart, which always forgot party, when a good-natured act was to be done, gave his sonorous cheer. From that instant, I breathed freely, and, recovering my voice and mind together, I plunged boldly into the boundless subject before me.

After discussing a few of the showy sophisms which the orator of the opposition had constructed into his specious argument, I placed the war on the ground of necessity. "Nations cannot act like individuals—they cannot submit to self-sacrifice—they cannot give up their rights—they cannot affect an indolent disdain or an idle generosity. The reason of the distinction is, that in every instance the nation is a trustee—it has the rights of posterity in its keeping; it has nothing of its own to throw away; it is responsible to every generation to come. If war be essential to the integrity of the empire, war is as much a duty—a terrible duty, I allow—as the protection of our children's property from the grasp of rapine, or the defence of their lives against the midnight robber. But, we are advised to peace. No man on earth

would do more willing homage than myself to that beneficent genius of nations.

“But where am I to offer my homage? Am I to kneel on the high-road, where the enemy’s armies, fierce with the hope of plunder, are rushing along? Am I to build my altar in the midst of contending thousands, or on the ground covered with corpses—in the field of battle, or on the grave? Or am I to carry my offering to the capital, and there talk the language of national cordiality, in the ear of the multitude dragging their king to the scaffold? Am I to appeal to the feelings of human brotherhood, in streets smoking with civil massacre; to adjure the nation by the national honour, where revolt is an avowed principle; to press upon them the opinion of Europe, where they have proclaimed war with the world; to invoke them by the faith which they have renounced, or the allegiance which they have disdained, or the God whom they have blasphemed? Are those things possible? If we are to have a treaty with this new order of thinking and action, it must be on principles like their own; it must be a compact of crime, a solemn agreement of treachery, a formal bond of plunder; it must be a treaty fitter for the cavern of conspiracy than for the chamber of council; its pledge must be like that of Catiline, the cup of human blood!

“No! the most powerful reprobation which ever shot from the indignant lip of the moralist, would not be too strong, for the baseness which stooped to such a treaty, or for the folly which entangled itself in such toils. Not even the burning language of prophecy would be too solemn, or too stinging, for the premeditated

wretchedness, and incurable calamity, of such a bond. No! if we must violate the simplicity of our national objects by such degrading, and such desperate, involvements; if we should not shrink from this conspiracy against mankind, let it, at least, not be consummated in the face of day; let us at once abandon the hollow pretences of human honesty; let us pledge ourselves to a perpetual league with rapine and revolution; let it be transacted not in this place of national council, but in some haunt of darkness and shame; and let its ceremonial be worthy of the Spirit of evil which it embodies, whose power it proclaims, and to whose supremacy it commands all nations to bow down."

In alluding to the menace, that our allies would soon desert us, I asked, "Is this to be the magnanimity of party? Is England to be pronounced so poor, or so pusillanimous, that she must give up all hope, unless she can be suffered to lurk in the rear of the battle? What says her prince of poets?—

‘ England shall never rue,
If England to herself shall be but true.’

Is this ‘ little body with a mighty heart,’ to depend for existence on the decaying strength, or the decrepit courage, of the Continent? Is she only to borrow the shattered armour which has hung up for ages in the halls of continental royalty, and encumber herself with its broken and rusty panoply for the ridicule of the world?

“ But we are told that all is lost. I allow, that the European governments have undergone the vicissi-

tudes of fortune. But, instead of scoffing at the facility of their overthrow, let us raise them on their feet again; or, if that be beyond human means, I shall not join the party-cry which insults their fall—I certainly shall not exult in that melancholy pageant of mixed mirth and scorn, in which, like the old Roman triumph, the soldier with his ruthless jest and song goes before the chariot, and the captive monarch follows behind; wearing the royal robe and the diadem only till he has gratified a barbarous curiosity or a cruel pride, and then exchanging them for the manacle and the dungeon.—I deprecate the loss of these alliances; and yet I doubt, whether the country will ever be conscious of her true strength, until the war of the Continent is at an end. I more than doubt the wisdom, of suffering others to take the lead, which belongs to us by the right of superior rank, superior prowess, and superior fame. I shall have but slight regret for the fall of those outworks which—massive, nay, majestic, as they are—waste the power of England, by the division of her force, and make us decline the gallant enterprize of the field—ramparts and fosses, which reduce us to defence, and which, while they offer a thousand points of entrance to an active assault, shut us in, and disqualify us from victory.”

I now repeat this language of the moment, solely from later and long experience of its truth. I fully believe, that if England had come forward to the front of the battle, in the early years of the war, she would have crushed all resistance; or if she had found, by the chance of things, the Continent impe-

netrable to her arms, she would have shut it in, with a circumvallation of iron, until its factions had worn each other out, and dismay had subdued the frenzy of the age.

I was now fully engaged in public life. The effort which I had made in Parliament had received the approval of Pitt; who, without stooping to notice things so trivial, as style and manner, on questions of national life and death; highly applauded the courage which had dared to face so distinguished a Parliamentary favourite as Sheridan, and which had taken a view of affairs so accordant with his own. From this period, I was constantly occupied in debate; and, taking the premier for my model, I made rapid proficiency in the difficult art of addressing a British House of Commons.

Of course I have no idea of giving myself that praise on the subject; which no man can give to himself on any, without offence. But I felt, that it was an *art* which might escape, and which had often escaped, men of distinguished ability; yet might be possessed by men of powers altogether inferior. I must acknowledge, too, that a portion of my success was owing to the advice of that shrewdest, and at the same time most friendly of human beings, the secretary.

“You must be a man of business,” said he, “or you will be nothing; for praise is nothing—popularity is nothing—even the applause of the House is nothing. These matters pass away, and the orators pass away with them. John Bull is a solid animal, and likes reality. This accounts at once for the success

of hundreds of men of mediocrity, and for the failure of so many men of fine powers. The latter fly too high, and thus make no way along the ground; They always alight on the same spot. While the weaker, but wiser, have simply put one foot before the other, and have pushed on. Sheridan, at this moment, has no more weight in the House, than he had within a twelvemonth after taking his seat. Fox, with the most powerful abilities, is looked on, as little beyond a magnificent speechmaker. His only weight is in his "following." If his party fell from him tomorrow, all his eloquence would find its only echo in bare walls, and its only panegyric in street-placards. Pitt is a man of business, complete, profound, indefatigable. If you have his talents, copy his prudence; if you have not, still copy his prudence—make it the interest of men to consult you, and you must be ultimately successful."

I laughingly observed, that the "Nullum numen abest" had been honoured with an unexpected illustration.

"Sir," said the minister, fixing his keen grey eye upon me, "if Eton had never taught any other maxim, it would have been well worth all the toil of its "longs and shorts."—It is the concentration of wisdom, personal, private, and public; the polar star of politics, as probably you would say; or, as I, in my matter-of-fact style should express it, the finger-post of the road to fortune."

There never was a time when all the maxims of political wisdom were more required. A long succession of disasters had already broken down the

outworks of the continental thrones. The renown of the great armies of Germany was lost; the discipline of the Prussian, and the steady intrepidity of the Austrian, had been swept before the wild disorder of the French. Men began to believe that the great art of war was hitherto unknown, and that the enemy had at length mastered the exclusive secret. Monarchy came to be regarded as only another name for weakness; and civilized order for national decrepitude. A kind of superstition stole over the minds of men; the signs of European overthrow were fancifully discovered, in every change; calculations were calmly raised on the chances of existence in the most powerful dynasties; the age of crowns was in the wane, the age of republics was in the ascendant; and while the feebler minds looked with quiescent awe, on what they regarded as the inevitable tide of events, the more daring regarded the prospect as a summons to prepare for their part in the spoil. The struggles of Opposition grew more resolute, as its hope of success came nearer; and the Government began to feel the effects of this perpetual assault, in the sudden neutrality of some of its most ostentatious champions, and in the general reserve of its supporters in the House. Even the stern perseverance of Pitt was beginning to be weary of a contest, in which victory lost its fruits, on the one side; while defeat seemed only to give fresh vigour, on the other.

I was returning one morning from the House, after a night spent in a fierce debate on the war, which Fox denounced with an asperity unusual to his generous temperament. The premier had made

a powerful appeal, vindicating the government from all share in the continental misfortunes; pronouncing loftily, that, in a war not made for conquest, it was sophistry to speak of our failure of possession as a crime; and declaring in a tone of singular boldness and energy—that if the Continent were untrod by a British soldier, there was a still broader field for the arms and the triumphs of England. But his eloquence had more effect in exposing the errors, than in reducing the numbers of his opponents, and the smallness of his majority would have made a feebler spirit resign on the spot. The announcement of the numbers was received with an insulting cheer by the minority, and the cabinet was already by anticipation in their hands.

I left the House, wearied and dejected, and was returning to Downing-street, to throw myself on a couch, and get a few hours of rest before my morning toil; when I found a messenger at the door of my office, with a request from the secretary of state, that I should attend him as soon as possible. I found my friend before a table covered with despatches, his brow furrowed with weariness like my own.

“You see me here, Marston, more tired than any ploughman or watchman, or any other son of labour, from this to John O’Groat’s House. I was sent for, from the House, six hours ago, and every hour since have I been poring over those puzzled papers. How long I can stand this wear and tear the physicians must tell, but it would require the constitution of Hercules or Sampson, or both together, to go through

the work that is beginning to fall on the members of the cabinet.

I offered to give him such assistance at the time, as was in my power.

“No, no, Sir; I am chained to the oar for to-night at least, and must pull, till I fall asleep. My purpose in keeping you from your pillow at this hour, is not, to relieve myself from trouble; but, to ask, whether you are disposed to relieve the government from a serious difficulty, and in a way which I hope will be not disagreeable to yourself.” I concluded that my mission was to be continental, and my heart danced at the suggestion. In England, it was impossible to continue my search for the being on whom all my thoughts were fixed; but, once beyond the sea, and I should have the world before me. I asked, “whether there was any intention of trying the chances of attack again on the French frontier?”

“None whatever. The greater probability is, that the French will make some experiment on the strength of ours.”

I looked all astonishment. He interpreted my look, and said—“To solve the enigma at once, It is our wish, to send you to Ireland. The danger is there.”

I listened in silence while he went into a long detail of the hazard of the island, arising from the interests of a powerful republican party; who, inflamed by the successes of France, were preparing to receive troops and arms from the republic. He finished by saying, in a tone of compliment, which, from him, was as unusual, as I believe it was sincere;

that my exertions in the House had attracted consideration in the highest quarter, and that I had been proposed, in that quarter, for the chief-secretaryship of Ireland. He added, that the premier had assented to the appointment at once; "and here," said he, "is the warrant, which I have prepared, in anticipation of its acceptance.—You are, from this moment, the virtual viceroy of Ireland." I was deeply disappointed.

And yet, this was unexpected elevation! I had at once surmounted all the slow gradations of office; the broadest prospect of official ambition was suddenly opened before me; popularity, founded on the most solid grounds, was now waiting only my acceptance; the sense of power, always dear to the heart of man, was offered its full gratification. But, it is only justice to myself to say, that the deciding impulse, after all, was the desire to leave a name, as the benefactor of a people, who seemed to me as much gifted by nature, as they were unhappy by circumstances.

"How long will it take you to prepare for the journey?" asked the minister.

"Half an hour," was my reply.

"Bravo! Marston. I see that your campaigning has not been thrown away upon you. You have the soldier's promptitude. We were prepared to allow you a week. But, the sooner you set off the better. The truth is," said he rising, "we feel great difficulties in that quarter.—The most thoroughly English portion of the island is at this moment the most disturbed. There are drillings, purchases of arms, midnight musterings, and even something not far from prepared attacks upon the king's troops.

The papers among which you found me, contain a regular, and a very complete, organization of an insurrectionary government. You will require all the energy of the soldier, and all the prudence of the statesman."

"Let me add to them," said I, "what is essential to the success of both, in a country of generous hearts and quick conceptions, the sincerity of a patriot."

"The experiment is well worth making," said he with a smile, "if it were only for your own sake. But Ireland has qualities which, like those of her soil, require only to be turned up to the light, to reward all the labours of wealth or wisdom." Before that evening closed, I was a hundred miles on my way to the Irish capital. A rapid journey, and a tranquil passage over the sixty miles of sea, that lie between Wales and Ireland, gave me, what an old Roman would regard as an omen of the peacefulness and success of my mission.

On the dawn of one of the finest mornings of the year, I came within sight of the Irish shore; and was struck, as all travellers have been, by the beauty of the bold and picturesque coast, which rose from the waters before me. In front was a province of mountains, touched by all the variety of colours, which are painted in such richness by the summer sun, on groups of pinnacles and cones, forest hills, and the fine diversities of woodland and mountain scenery. On one side, the eye glanced over a vast sheet of water, shut in by headlands, and as blue and bright as a lake under an Italian sky. At the extremity of this noble estuary, a cloud, unchanging

and unmoving, showed where a city sent up the smoke of its ten thousand fires ; there lay the Capital.

My official rank threw open the *élite* of Irish society to me at my first step ; and I found it, as it has been found by every one else, animated, graceful, and hospitable. Even the nature of its government tended to those qualifications. While the grave business of the state was done in London, the lighter business of public life was sedulously sustained in the Irish capital. The lord-lieutenant was generally a nobleman, selected more for his rank and wealth, than for his statesmanship. A rich, showy, and good-humoured peer was then the true man for the head of affairs in Ireland. It was of more importance, that he should give balls and suppers, say lively things to the ladies, and be jocular with the gentlemen, than that he should have the brains of Bolingbroke or the tongue of Chatham. But the position of the secretary was the antipodes of this tranquil and festive sinecure. He was, in Ireland, what the premier was in England ; but with ten times more of the difficulty, and ten times less of the power. The whole conduct of public affairs lay on his shoulders ; he was responsible for every thing, while he was free in nothing ; he was perpetually assailed by Opposition for measures which he was not at liberty to explain, and placed between the English cabinet and the Irish party, as a scapegoat for the mistakes of the one, and a target for the shot of the other.

But his chief trial of temper was in the House of Commons. Opposition in Ireland never exhibited a list of more remarkable names. Government had a

majority behind its bench, and that majority often recruited from the ranks of Opposition ; but the more distinguished were fixed to party by their own celebrity ; and the recruits, however sincere, were so liable to be attacked for their change of side, that they were paralyzed ; and in some instances, they were so much galled by the merciless sharp-shooting of their former associates, that they ran back, and left the minister to fight the battle alone.

I was fortunately free from the entanglements of that question, which has since formed so large a portion of the political disquietudes of Irish debate.—The religion of the south was not yet among parliamentary topics. The religion of the north, active, ardent, and indefatigable, was our most restless theme ; and the political theories which seemed to grow out of its bold abstractions, kept the government in perpetual anxiety. The whole northern portion of the island was ripe for revolt. America had blown the hot-blast of the revolutionary furnace across the Atlantic, and a spark from France would have now ignited the whole moral surface of the soil.

One of my first acts, after arranging the preliminary business of office, was to make a flying tour through Ulster. I was astonished at its beauty. Even after being familiar with the loveliness of the English landscape, I was in a state of continual surprise at the variety, richness, and singularity, of nature in the northern counties. Mountain, lake, stately bay, and broad river, followed each other in noble and unceasing succession. I was still more struck with the skill and good fortune, by which

the people had contrived to combine the industry of manufactures with the life of the fields ; a problem which England herself had failed to solve. But, most of all, I was attracted by the independent air, and handsome and vigorous appearance of a people; where almost every man was a proprietor, and had the look which proprietorship alone can give. I found books in almost every cottage, decency of dress every where, and among the higher orders frequent elegance and accomplishment. The women were cultivated and intelligent; the men, spirited and enquiring. Unhappily, the politics of France had made their way through a large portion of the province, and the glories of a republic "loomed large" before the popular eye.

As it was my purpose to see, all that I could, with my own eyes ; I mingled largely in society, made no distinction between honourable men of different political creeds, enjoyed on one day the stag-hunt and claret of the noble Whig, and on the next, the stag-hunt and claret of the noble Tory, listened to all, laughed with all, and learned something from all. The English aristocrat, especially if he held high official rank, once haunted the imaginations of the Irish of all orders and creeds, like the incarnation of an Indian deity—all fierceness and frigidity; and it must be acknowledged that the general muster-roll of viceroys and secretaries had hitherto not tended much to remove the conception. They were chiefly men in advanced life, with habits formed by intercourse with the most exclusive class in existence, the English peerage ; or rendered rigid by the dry formalities of their official career. But, I was young, had seen a good deal of that rough work of

the world, which gives pliancy, if not polish, to all characters; and I was, besides, really delighted with the liveliness, pleasantry, and winning kindness, which exhibited themselves every where round me. With the people, I was half a son of Ireland already, and I regarded the recognition as the pledge of my success.

“Do you know,” said one of the most influential and accomplished noblemen of the country to me, one day at his sumptuous table—“how many of the lords-lieutenant have left a popular recollection behind them?”

I professed my ignorance; but enumerated some names remarkable for intelligence and vigour of administration.

“Oh,” said my entertainer, “that was not the question! Grave statesmen and showy governors, capital rulers of the country, and bold managers of our factions, we have had in sufficient succession; but I speak of the faculty of being remembered; the talent of making a public impression; the power of escaping that national oblivion into which mere official services, let them be of what magnitude they may, inevitably drop, when their performer has disappeared.—Well, then, I shall tell you. *Two*, and no more.”

I begged to know the names of those “discoverers of the grand secret, the philosopher’s stone of popularity, the alchemists who had power to fix the floating essence of the Irish mind!”

“Chesterfield and Townshend. Chesterfield, regarded as a fop in England, was a daring, steady, and subtle governor of the unruly spirits of Ireland, in one of its most hazardous periods. That the throne

of the Brunswicks did not see an Irish revolt, at the moment when it saw a Scottish invasion, was the service of Chesterfield. But he ruled less by his wisdom, than by his wit. He broke down faction by *bon-mots*; he extinguished conspiracy by happy compliments; administered the sternest law with the most polished smile; and cut down rebellion by quotations from La Fontaine, and *calembourgs* from Scarron. Still, with those fortunate pleasantries he combined public and solid services. Among the rest; he threw a large portion of the crown lands into a park for the popular recreation, and thus gave one of the earliest examples of regard for the health and enjoyment of the citizens; a more enduring monument of his statesmanship could not have been offered to the gratitude of the country."

Of the Marquis Townshend I had heard as a gallant soldier, and a stirring viceroy, but I still had to learn the source of his popularity.

"Townshend was one of those singular men, who possess faculties of which they have no knowledge, until the moment when they become necessary. He began life as a soldier, and finished his soldiership in sharing the most important victory of his day; the battle of Quebec. On his appointment to the viceroyalty, he found his government a chaos; a government faction superseding the governor, and an opposition faction engrossing the people. He now, for the first time, became a politician. He resolved to crush both, and he succeeded. He treated the government faction in Ireland with contumely; and he treated the opposition with contempt. Both deserved

the treatment. Both were indignant; he laughed at both, and treated them with still deeper scorn. Both were astonished—the government faction intrigued against him in England, the opposition threatened impeachment. He defied them still more haughtily. They at length found that he was not to be shaken, and both submitted. The nation joined him, and was pacified; grew in vigour, as it grew in tranquillity; and in that tranquillity you have the secret of all the privileges which Ireland has ever obtained.

“Townshend had performed, only on a smaller scale, the same national service, which Pitt afterwards performed in England. He took the people out of the hands of party, broke up the league of faction, and gave the island that freedom, which the great minister of England gave to the empire. For this the name of Townshend lives among us still. His bold satires are recorded, his gallant bearing is remembered, his passing pleasantries have become a portion of the national wit, and his rough, but effectual, services are among the memorials of our independence as a people.”

The evening of this hospitable day concluded with a ball to the neighbouring families, and all was graceful and animated enjoyment. My host had travelled much in early life, and had brought home some fine pictures and valuable sculptures. He was an accomplished classical scholar—a quality which I found, in some degree, fashionable among the leading personages of the time, and which unquestionably added much to the high tone of conversation among the parliamentary circles. In his stately mansion

an artist might have found studies, a scholar learning, a philosopher wisdom, and a man of the world all the charms of polished life.—Yet, how soon, and how fearfully, were they all to be extinguished! How bitterly were all who honoured and esteemed that generous and highly-gifted nobleman, to feel “what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!”

Our mornings were chiefly spent in hunting, over the fine landscape which spread, in all the various beauty of cultivation, within view of the mansion. On one of those days, the observation of the field was caught by the fierce riding of a singular-looking man, scarcely above the peasant in his general appearance, and yet mounted on one of the finest English hunters that I had ever seen. He rode at every thing, managed his horse with practised skill, and soon became an object of general emulation. To “ride up” to the “wild Huntsman,” was found to be a task not easily accomplished, and, at length, all was a trial of speed with this dashing exhibitor. A glance which, when on the point of one of his most desperate leaps, he threw back at me, seemed a kind of personal challenge, and I rushed on at speed.

The Irish hunter is matchless at “topping” stone walls, but his practice has not lain much among rivers; and the English horse is sometimes his master at the deep and rapid streams which, running between crumbling banks, are perhaps the severest trials to both horse and rider. The majority of the hunt pulled up at the edge of one of those formidable chasms, and I was by no means unwilling to follow their example; but the look of the stranger had

a sneer along with it, which put me on my mettle, and I dashed after him. The hounds had scrambled through, and we rode nearly abreast through a broken country, that mixture of bog and firm ground which occurs frequently in newly-cleared land, and over which nothing but the most powerful sinews can make way. We had now left every one behind us, and were struggling on through the dimness of a hazy day, sinking into twilight. Suddenly, my mysterious rival turned his horse full upon me, and, to my utter amazement, discharged a pistol at my head.

The discharge was so close, that I escaped only by the swerving of my horse at the flash. I felt my face burn, and in the impulse of the pain made a blind blow at him with my whip. He had drawn out another pistol in an instant, which the blow luckily dashed out of his hand. No words passed between us, but I made a bound to seize him. He slipped away from my grasp, and, striking in the spur, galloped furiously forward, I in pursuit. The twilight had now deepened, and he plunged into a lane bounded on both sides by steep hedges, and which, from some former hunting in this quarter, I knew to be a *cul-de-sac*. This doubled my determination to make myself master of the assassin: for, even in the hurry of the moment I had formed some conception of my having seen his face before, and that the attempt to put me out of the way was connected, in some way or other, with public affairs.

The question was soon decided. He reached the end of the lane, which was shut in with a wall of about the height of a man. His horse shied

at the obstacle. The rider, with an oath and a desperate exertion, pushed him at it again. I was now within a few yards of him, and arrived only in time to see the animal make a convulsive spring, touch with his hinder feet on the top of the wall, and roll over. My Irish horse cleared it in the native style, and I found my enemy crushed under his hunter, and evidently in the pangs of death. He had been flung on a heap of stones, and the weight of the falling horse had broken his spine. I poured some brandy down his throat, relieved him from the incumbrance of the hunter, and attempted to give him hope. But he told me "that it was useless; that he felt death coming on, and that I was the last man who should wish him to live,—he had pledged himself to my extinction." In his agony; his recollections grew wild, and he talked of events in France and Spain; where he seemed to have done some deeds, which affected him with peculiar horror in the prospect of his dissolution.

But, after a brief period of those terrible disclosures, his pains suddenly ceased, his mind grew clear; and he acknowledged—that he was one of the leading agents in a National Conspiracy to republicanize Ireland. "You are too kind," said he, "to one, who now sees the madness of the whole design, and is sensible of the guilt of taking away the lives of honourable men." A lapse of weakness here tied his tongue; and I brought him a draught of water from a spring which gurgled beside the wall. He thanked me, and proceeded to say, that my "character for vigilance and activity had alarmed the principal conspirators, and that he, thinking all crimes meritorious in a

popular cause, had resolved to signalize the commencement of his services, by putting the English secretary to death, on the first occasion."

For this purpose, he had pursued my steps for some time in the metropolis, but without finding a fitting opportunity. The intelligence of my hunting days in the north gave him renewed expectations, and he had followed me in various disguises; had been present at dinners and balls, where I was the principal guest; had even frequently conversed with me on public and foreign topics; in fact, had haunted me, with a case of pistols constantly in his bosom; yet had never been able to find the exact opportunity of despatching me without *éclat*.

He had, at last, determined to give up the object, as altogether hopeless; and was already prepared to act on a bolder scale, by heading open rebellion; when he heard of my intending to hunt on this day. It was to be his last experiment; "and how rejoiced I am," said he, "that it has failed!" He now remained for a while in apparent meditation, and then suddenly raising himself on his arm, said, in a calm and manly tone—"One thing I still can do in this world, if it may not be too late.—Leave me here; I must die; go back in all haste to your friends, and tell them to prepare, either to fly, or to defend their lives.—This is the night appointed for the insurrection. Fifty thousand men are armed in the mountains, and ready for the signal to march on the principal towns. The few troops in the country are to be made prisoners in their barracks. The government stores are to be divided among the people.

Before twelve hours are over, we shall have a force of a hundred thousand men on foot; and a republic will be proclaimed."

The intelligence was startling, though not wholly unexpected. I demanded the names of the leaders; but, on that head he refused to make any answer. I next enquired, "whether the rebel directory had any hope of assistance from the Continent." "That I can fully answer," said he, now almost at his last gasp; "for I myself was the negotiator. It is but a month, since I was in Paris. The government agreed to send twenty sail of the line, with ten thousand troops, and Hoche, the favourite general of the republic, to the north; or, in case of unexpected obstacles, to the south of Ireland. I have been looking out for their flag, from hour to hour." The man sank back on the ground. I prepared to seek for help, if there were any to be found near that desolate place. He grasped my hand; his was icy. "No," said he, "I must now be left alone; I am dying—and I am not sorry to die. I am free from your blood, and I shall escape the horrors which I see at hand. Men in health, and men dying, think differently of those things. Farewell!" He gave my hand a convulsive clasp, and expired.

My situation was now an anxious one. Night had fallen, and the hour was full of peril to those whom I had left behind; it was even possible, that the insurrection might have already broken out. Sounds, which seemed to me, in the stillness of the hour, to be the signals of the peasantry—the echoes of horns, and the trampling of bodies of horse—began to rise

upon the gust ; and yet I was unwilling to leave my unfortunate victim on the ground. At length, a loud shout, and the firing of musketry, on the skirts of the wood, awoke me to a sense of the real danger of my situation. I forced my way through the thickets, and saw a skirmish between a large mass of armed men, and a picket of troops in a village on the borders of the grove. There was now no time to be lost. I returned to the spot where the body lay, placed my hand on its forehead, to ascertain whether any remnant of life lingered there ; found all cold ; and, remounting my horse, speeded my dreary and difficult way back to the mansion.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“ Look—

Our lamp is spent, is out. Good sirs, take heart,
We'll bury him ; and then what's brave, what's noble,
We'll do it—after the high Roman fashion,
And make Death proud to take us.—Come, away,
The case of that high spirit now is cold.”

SHAKSPEARE.

To my surprise, I found the windows blazing with lights, carriages arriving, and all the signs of a night of gala. I had forgotten, that this was my noble entertainer's birthday, and that the whole circle of the neighbouring nobles and gentlemen had been for the last month invited.—There were to be private theatricals, followed by a ball and supper. The whole country continued to pour in. Full of my disastrous intelligence, my first inquiry was for the noble host ; but, he was not to be seen. I was at length informed, under the seal of secrecy, by his secretary ; that some information of popular movements within a few miles, having been conveyed to him late in the day, he had put himself at the head of a squadron of his yeomanry, to ascertain the nature of the disturbance ; and, as it was then too late to

countermand the invitations to the ball ; he had given strict orders, that the cause of his absence should be concealed, and that the entertainments should go on, as if he were present.

Agreeing that this was the wisest thing which could be done, to avoid unnecessary alarm ; which paralyses action beforehand, and renders every thing ridiculous after ; I seldom felt it more difficult to play my part than on this occasion. As a minister, any solicitude on my side, was sure to be magnified into actual disaster ; and I was forced to keep an unembarrassed countenance. But, I immediately sent out servants in every direction, to bring me intelligence of the actual state of affairs, and above all, to ascertain what had delayed their master. Though all this was done with the utmost secrecy, it was impossible to suppress the general feeling, that something extraordinary must have occurred, to withdraw from his own hospitable roof, and so long detain, the lord of the mansion, distinguished as he was for the most polished courtesy.

As the hour waned, the enquiries became more urgent, the dance languished, and the showy crowd forming into groups, and wandering through the saloons, or gathered to the windows, had evidently lost all the spirit of festivity. To my astonishment, strong opinions began to find utterance ; and I discovered, that his lordship, in his general and lofty disregard of the shades of popular sentiment, had among his guests some individuals, whose rank and wealth had not preserved them from the taint of republicanism. As it was not my purpose, to make a ball-room the

scene of a political squabble, and as I felt it due to my official position, to avoid any unnecessary entanglement in the obscure follies of provincial partizanship, I, at first, tried to laugh down the topic. But, a young orator, a heated and fluent enthusiast, recently returned from a continental excursion, gave so stirring a picture of the glories of French independence, and the glittering advantages which must accrue to all countries following the example; that I was forced to stand on my defence.

Still, the gallant republican was not to be repelled; he poured out upon me, as he warmed with the theme, so vast a catalogue of public injuries, in language so menacing, that I was forced to ask him, whether I was standing in the midst of a Jacobin club; whether his object was actually to establish a democracy, to govern by the guillotine, to close up the churches, and inscribe the tombs with "death is an eternal sleep." Our dispute had now attracted general notice. He answered with still more vehement and elaborate detail. I had evidently the majority on my side; but many adhered to him, and those, too, men of consequence, and of obvious determination.

The ladies shrank affrighted, as the contest grew more angry; and the usual and unhappy result of political discussion in Ireland, an exchange of cards, was about to take place; when one of the servants brought me a small packet of papers, which had been found on the body of the assassin. Glancing over them, I saw a list of the leaders of the insurrection, and, the first name in the paper, that of my anta-

gonist. I crushed the document in my hand, and beckoned him to a window. There, alone, and out of hearing of the guests, who, however, followed us anxiously with their eyes, I charged him with his guilt. He denied it fiercely. I gave him five minutes to consider, whether he would confess, or abide the consequences. His countenance visibly exhibited the perturbation of his mind; he turned pale and red alternately, shuddered, then braced himself up with desperate resolution, and finally ended by denying and defying everything.—It was not in my nature, to press upon this moment of agony; but, telling him, that nothing but compassion prevented my ordering his arrest on the spot; I again warned him to make his peace in time with the government, by a solemn abjuration of his design.

I have the whole scene before me still. This man was destined to a memorable, and a melancholy, fate. I never remember a countenance more expressive of intellectual refinement; but there was a look of strange and feverish restlessness in his large deep-seated eye, almost ominous of his future career. He was still young, though he had already gone through vicissitudes, enough to darken the longest life. He had been, a few years before, called to the bar, the favourite profession of the Irish gentry; where he had exhibited talents of a remarkable order; but an impatience of the slow success of his profession drove him to the hazards of political change. He had married, and thus increased his difficulties; until party came athwart him with its promises of bound-

less honour and rapid fortune. His sanguine nature embraced the temptation at once; but the parliamentary opposition was too deliberate and too frigid for his boiling blood; he plunged into the deeper and wilder region of conspiracy, took the lead, which is so soon assigned to the brilliant and the bold, and became the soul of the tremendous faction which was ready to proclaim the separation of the empire.

He had but now returned from France, with a commission in the army of the Republic, and a plan agreed on with the Directory for the invasion of Ireland, but those were discoveries to be made hereafter. On this night I saw nothing but a gallant enthusiast, filled with classic recollections, inflamed with the ardour of conscious ability, and deluded by dreams of political perfection. My sense of the utter ruin which he was preparing for himself was so strong, that I pressed him from point to point; until he was forced to take refuge in flight, and darting from me, burst open a door which led to the demesne. While I paused, not unwilling to give him the opportunity to escape, I heard a wild burst of wailing, and a confusion of voices outside. At the next moment, I saw the fugitive return, with a tottering step, a bloodless countenance, and a look of horror. Without a word, he pointed to the door; I followed the direction, and saw, what might well justify his feelings. The troop of yeomanry had been attacked on their return from patrolling the country; an ambuscade had been laid for them by a large force of the insurgents, in one of the narrow roads which bordered the demesne; and where, from its vicinity, they had imagined

themselves secure. As they moved down this defile, with their noble commandant at their head, a heavy fire of musketry assailed them from both sides ; and as the assailants were unapproachable, they had no resource but to gallop on. But they had no sooner reached the wider part of the road, than they found themselves fired on again, from behind a barricade of carts and waggons drawn across the road. The affair now seemed desperate ; the muzzles of the muskets almost touched their breasts, and every shot told. Their pistols could keep up only a random fire, and their sabres were wholly useless. They were now falling helplessly and fast ; when the earl ordered them to charge the insurgents in front, and force their way over the barricade at all risks. He bravely led the way, and they burst through, under a volley from the rebels. A ball fatally struck him, as he was in the act of cheering on his men, and he dropped dead from his horse, without a groan. The troop, furious at their loss, had inflicted a desperate slaughter, cleared the road, and had now brought the dead body of their lord to that mansion, where he had so long presided as the example of every high-toned quality, and which his fate was now to turn into a scene of terror and woe.

The melancholy tidings could no longer be suppressed, and the ball-room was filled with screams and faintings. The corpse was brought in, borne on the arms of the yeomanry, most of them wounded, and looking ghastly, from loss of blood and the agitation of the encounter. The guests crowded round the sofa on which the body was laid, with all the

varieties of sorrow and strong emotion conceivable, under the loss of a common and honoured friend. Tears fell down many a manly cheek ; sobs were heard on every side, mingled with outcries of indignation against the rebellious spirit by which so deep a calamity had been produced. But all other considerations were quickly absorbed, in the sense of general danger. A tremendous shout was heard round the mansion, followed by the discharge of musketry and the clashing of pikes. All rushed to the windows, and we saw the hills in a blaze with fires, and the country crowded with the armed force of the insurrection.

The insurrection had broken out ; there could now be no scepticism on the subject. Some hundreds of the insurgents were already filling the grounds in front of the mansion ; and, from the shouts which rose in every quarter, and still more from the fires which blazed on every hill round the horizon, the numbers of the insurgents must have amounted to thousands. It was evident that we were in a pitfall, and that resistance was only the protraction of a fate which was now inevitable. The shrieks of the females, and the despondency of the men, who naturally thought that their last hour was come, were enough to dishearten all resolution. For a few minutes, the only orders which I could give were, to bar the doors and close the windows. The multitude, new to hostile enterprises, had till now kept at some distance, warned by their losses in the skirmish with the yeomanry, and probably expecting the arrival of troops. But, the sight of our precautions, few and feeble as they were,

gave them new courage ; and discharges of musketry began to drop their bullets into the midst of our startled assemblage. It is only justice to the national intrepidity to say, that every measure which I proposed for defence was unhesitatingly adopted ; and that one of my chief difficulties was to prevent rash sallies, which must have only terminated in loss of life. The short interval now allowed to us was employed in barricading the mansion, which was built almost with the strength of a fortress, and posting every man who could handle a musket or pistol, at the windows.

Still, I knew that this species of defence could not last long ; and my only hope for our lives was, that the firing might bring some of the troops who patrolled the country to our assistance. But the discharges became closer and heavier, and yet, no sound of succour was to be heard. My situation became more anxious every moment : all looked up to me for their guidance ; and though my garrison were brave and obedient, as became the high-spirited sons of Ireland, there seemed the strongest probability that the night would end in a general massacre. But, there was no faint-heartedness under our roof ; our fire was stoutly kept up whenever the assailants came within range ; and as I hurried from chamber to chamber, to ascertain the condition of our defence and give directions, I found all firm. Still the terrors of the females—the sight of the first women of the province flying for refuge to every corner where they might escape the balls, which now poured into every window ; the actual wounds of some, visible by the blood streaming down their dresses ; the

horror-stricken looks of the groups clinging to each other for hopeless protection; and the actual semblance of death in others, fainting on the sofas and floors, and all this under an incessant roar of musketry—made me often wish that I could give way to the gallant impatience of my friends within the mansion, and take the desperate hazard of charging into the midst of the multitude.

But, a new danger awaited us; a succession of shrieks from one of the upper apartments caught my ear, and, on hurrying to the spot, and forcing my way through a crowd of women half frantic with terror; I saw some of the outbuildings, immediately connected with the mansion, wrapped in a sheet of fire. The insurgents had at last found out the true way to subdue our resistance; and we obviously had no alternative, but to throw ourselves on their mercy, or die with arms in our hands. Yet, to surrender, was perhaps only to suffer a more protracted death, degraded by shame; and when I gave a glance on the helplessness of the noble and beautiful women around me, and thought of the agony which must be felt by us, on seeing them thrown into the power of the assassins who were now roaring with triumph and vengeance; I dismissed all thoughts of submission at once, and determined to take the chances of resistance, while any man among us had the power to draw a trigger.

In rushing through the mansion, to make its defenders in the front aware of the new misfortune which threatened us, I happened to pass through the ball-room, where the corpse of its noble and brave master lay. One figure was standing there,

with his back to me, and evidently gazing on the body. All else was solitary. Of all the friends, guests, and domestics, not one had remained. But, loud as were the shouts outside, and constant as was the crashing of the musketry, I could hear a groan, which seemed to come from the very heart of that lonely bystander. I sprang towards him; he turned at the sound of my step, and to my surprise, I saw the face of the man, whose share in the insurrection I had so singularly ascertained. I had a loaded musket in my hand, and my first impulse, in the indignation of the moment, was to discharge its contents through his heart. But, he looked at me with a countenance of such utter dejection, that I dropped its muzzle to the ground, and demanded "What had brought him there, and at such a time?" "This!" he exclaimed, pointing to the pallid form on the sofa. "To that man I owed every thing. To his protection, to his generosity, to his nobleness of heart, I owed my education, my hopes, all my prospects in life. I should have died a thousand deaths rather than see a hair of his head touched—and now, there he lies." He sank upon his knees, took the hand of the dead, and wept over it in agony.

But, I had no leisure to wait upon his remorse; the volleys were pouring in, and the glare of the burning buildings showed me, that the flames were making fearful progress. "This," said I, "is your work. This murder is but the first-fruits of your treason; probably every life in this house will be given over to butchery within the hour." He sprang on his feet. "No, no," he cried, we are not murderers.

This is the frenzy of the populace. Regeneration must not begin by massacre."

The thought suddenly struck me, that I might make his fears, or his compunctions, at the moment, available.

"You are at my mercy," said I. "I might justly put you to death at the instant, as a rebel, in the fact; or I might deliver you up to the law, when your fate would be inevitable. I can make no compromise. But, if you would make such atonement to your own conscience, as may be found in undoing a part of the desperate work which you have done,—go out to those robbers and murderers who are now thirsting for our blood, and put a stop to their atrocities, if you can; save the lives of those in the house; or, if you cannot, die in the only attempt which can retrieve your memory."

He looked at me with a lack-lustre eye for a moment, and uttered a few wild words, as if his mind was wandering. I sternly repeated my demand, and at length, he agreed to try his influence with the multitude. I threw open the door, and sent him out, adding the words—"I shall have my eye upon you. If I find you swerve, I shall fire at you, in preference to any other man in the mob. We shall die together." He went forth, and I heard his recognition by the rebels, in their loud shouts, and their heavier fire against our feeble defences. But, after a few moments, the shouting and the fire ceased together. There was a pause; from its strangeness after the tumult of the last hour, scarcely less startling than the uproar. They appeared to be deliberating on

his proposition. But while we remained in this suspense, another change came; loud altercations were heard; and the pause was interrupted by a renewed rush to the assault. We now looked upon all as hopeless, and expected only to perish in the flames, which were rolling in broad sheets over the roof of the mansion. There was no symptom of faint-heartedness among us; but our ammunition was almost exhausted, and every countenance was pale with despair; another half hour, and our fate must be decided.

In this extremity, with every sense wound up to its utmost pitch, I thought that I heard the distant trampling of cavalry. It came nearer still. There was evident confusion among the rebels. At length a trumpet sounded the charge, and a squadron of horse burst into the lawn, sabreing and firing among the multitude. The struggle was fierce, but brief; and before we could unbar the doors, and pour out to take a part in the *mêlée*, all was done; the rebels had fled, the grounds were cleared, and the dragoons were gathering their prisoners.

All was now congratulation; and I received thanks from gallant lips, and from bright eyes, which might have flattered one fonder of flattery. All imputed their safety to the address, with which I had employed the feelings of the rebel leader. "But for the pause produced by his presence, all must have perished." It had given time for the cavalry to come up; they having been bewildered in crossing the country, and floundering through the wretched by-roads which then formed the disgrace of Ireland. Life is a chapter of accidents; and even their arrival had been a

matter of accident. An aide-de-camp of the viceroy had been sent in search of me with despatches : the officer in command at the next town had persuaded him, much against his will, to take as his escort, one of the night patrols of horse ; and thus were saved a hundred and fifty lives of the first personages of the province. By morning, the mansion, and all within it, would probably have been embers.

The aide-de-camp's despatches were sufficiently alarming. The lord-lieutenant had received from England details of the intended insurrection. The privy council had been summoned, and the usual commands were issued, to keep the troops throughout the country on the alert ; but the information was still so imperfect, the skill of the conspirators was so adroitly exerted in keeping their secret, and the outcry of the powerful parliamentary Opposition was so indignant and contemptuous at the remotest hint of popular disaffection ; that the Government was virtually paralysed.

But the question was now decided ; the scene which I had just witnessed, unhappily left no room for doubt, and I determined on returning to the metropolis without delay. I had no sooner expressed my intention, than I was assailed on all hands with advice, and even with entreaties, to postpone my journey ; until the flight of the rebels was fully ascertained, or at least till daylight gave me a better chance of personal safety. But, every moment now seemed to me more precious than the last ; and, breaking through a circle of the noble and the fair, I threw myself on my horse, and with the aide-de-camp and a

couple of dragoons for my escort, soon left the whole scene of entreaty and terror, sorrow and triumph, behind.

We rode hard through the night, observing frequent signs of the extended insurrection, in fires on the mountains, and the gatherings of peasantry on the roads—sometimes compelled to turn out of our way, by the evidence of their being armed and in military organization; and at others dashing through the groups, and taking them by surprise. A few shots fired at random, or the rage and roar of the crowd as we scattered them right and left in our gallop, were all that belonged to personal adventure; and when the dawn showed us, from one of the hills round the capital, the quiet city glittering in the first sunshine; all looked so lovely and so tranquil, that it required the desperate recollections of the night to believe in the existence of a vast and powerful combination, prepared to cover the land with burning and blood.

Within a few hours after my arrival, the privy council assembled; my intelligence was received as it deserved; it decided the wavering, and gave increased determination to the bold. Still, our sitting was long and anxious. The peril was now undeniable, but the extent, the object, and the remedy, were alike obscure. It is not, of course, within my purpose to reveal the secrets of councils, in which all is transacted under the deepest bond of confidence; but it may be fairly told, that our deliberations often completely reversed the proverb, that “In the multitude of counsellors there is safety,” if by safety is meant either promptitude or penetration.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“ So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frightened peace to pant
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils.
No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
Shall damp her lips with her own children's blood ;
No more shall trenching war channel her fields,
Nor bruise her flowrets with the armed hoofs
Of hostile paces.”

SHAKSPEARE.

BUT, there was one man among them, who would have distinguished himself in any council upon earth. He was a lawyer, and holding the highest office of his profession. Yet, his ambition was still higher than his office, and his ability was equal to his ambition. Bold by nature, and rendered bolder by the constant success of his career, he would have been a matchless minister in a Continental government. Living under the old *régime* of France, the laurels of a Richelieu or a Mazarin, might have found a formidable competitor in this man of daring and decision. He wanted but their scale of action, to have exhibited all their virtues, and perhaps all their vices.

At the bar, his career had been one of unexampled

rapidity. He had scarcely appeared, when he burst through the crowd, and took the rank, to which all the dignities of the profession seem the natural inheritance. He had scarcely set his foot on the floor, before he overtopped the bench. But the courts of justice were too narrow for him. It was in parliament that he found the true atmosphere for his loftiness of flight and keenness of vision.

At that time, the study of public speaking had become a fashion, and the genius of the country, singularly excitable, always ardent, and always making its noblest efforts under the spell of public display, exhibited the most brilliant proofs of its title to popularity. But, in the very blaze of those triumphs, the Attorney-general showed, that there were other weapons of public warfare, not less original and not less triumphant. No orator, and even no rhetorician, he seemed to despise alike the lustre of imagination and the graces of language. But he substituted a force, that often obtained the victory over both. Abrupt, bold, and scornful, his words 'struck home. He had all the power of plain things. He brought down no lightnings from the heaven of invention, he summoned no flame from below; but the torch in his hand burned with withering power, and he wielded it without fear of man. By constitution haughty, his pride actually gave him power in debate. Men, and those able men too, often shrank from the conflict with one whose very look seemed to warn them of their temerity.

But to this natural faculty of debate, he added remarkable knowledge of public life, high legal repute, and the incomparable advantage of his early

training in a profession, which singularly searches the recesses of the soul, habitually forces imposture into light, and cross-examines the villain into reluctant veracity. There never was in Parliament a more remorseless or a more effectual hand, in stripping off the tinsel of political pretension. His logic was contemptuous, and his contempt was logical. His blows were all straightforward. He wasted no time in the flourish of the sword; he struck with the point. Even to the most powerful of his opponents, this assault was formidable. But, with the inferior ranks of Opposition, he threw aside the sword and assumed the axe. Obviously regarding them as criminals against common sense and national polity, he treated them as the executioner might treat culprits already bound to the wheel, measuring the place for his blows with the professional eye, and crushing limb after limb at his leisure. The imperfect records of debating in his day, have deprived parliamentary recollection, of the most memorable of those great displays. But, their evidence is given, in the fact, that with the most numerous, powerful, and able Opposition of Ireland in his front, and the feeblest Ministerial strength behind him; the Attorney-general governed the Parliament, until the hour when its gates were closed for ever—until its substance was dissipated into air, and all but its memories sank into the returnless grave.

In the House of Lords, as chancellor, he instantly became the virtual viceroy. It is true, that a succession of opulent and accomplished noblemen, every two or three years, were transmitted from Whitehall to the Castle, to pillow themselves upon a splendid

sinecure, rehearse an annual King's speech, exhibit the acknowledged elegance of noble English life, and, having given the destined number of balls and suppers, await the warrant of a Secretary of State's letter, to terminate their political existence. But the chancellor was made of "sterner stuff." His material was not soluble by a blast of ministerial breath. Not even the giant grasp of Pitt would have dared to pluck the sceptre from his hand. If struck, he might have answered the blow as the flint answers, by fire. But the premier had higher reasons, for leaving him in possession of power; he was pure. In all the uproar of public calumny, no voice was ever heard impeaching his integrity; with the ten thousand arrows of party flying round him from every quarter, none ever found a chink in his ministerial mail. He loved power, as all men do who are worthy of it. He disdained wealth, as all men do who are fitted for its use. He scorned the popularity of the day, as all men must, who know the essential baseness of its purchase; and, aspiring after a name in the annals of his country, like all men to whom it is due—like them, he proudly left the debt to be discharged by posterity.

The chancellor was not without his faults. His scorn was too palpable. He despised too many, and the many too much. His haughtiness converted the perishable and purchasable malice of party, into the "study of revenge, immortal hate." When he struck down an opponent in the fair strife of Parliament, his scorn was like poison in the wound, and the blow was never forgotten, but in the grave. But as a statesman, his chief and unconquerable mis-

fortune was the narrowness of his scene of action. He was but the ruler of a province, while his faculties were fitted for the administration of an empire. His errors were the offspring of his position. He was the strong man within four walls; by the very length of his stride striking against them at every step, and bruised by the very energy of his impulse against his hopeless boundaries.

At length a time of desperate trial arose. The Rebellion of 1798 burst out. He had foreseen it. But the men of the Castle, lolling on their couches, would not believe in its possibility. The men of the populace, stirring up the rabble with the point of the dagger, derided him as a libeller of the people; and even the Government of England—too anxiously engaged in watching the movements of the French legions from the heights of Dover, to have time for a glance at disturbers behind the Irish Channel—for a time left him to his fate. But he was equal to the emergency. He had been scoffingly called “the Cassandra of the aristocracy;” but he had neither the fortunes nor the failures of a Cassandra; he had not forfeited his virtues for his gift, and his prophecy was too soon and too terribly realized to be disbelieved. Of such times it is painful to speak; but, of the men by whom such times are met, it is dishonourable not to speak with homage. Almost abandoned by authority, assailed almost by a nation, with the ground shaking under his feet, and the whole frame of Government quivering at every roar of the multitude in arms; he stood the shock, and finally restored the country.

Language like this has not been the first tribute to the memory of this ardent, vigorous, and unshrinking statesman. But its chief use, and the noblest use of all tributes to the tomb of civil heroism, is, to tell others by what strength of principle, and by what perseverance of purpose, the rescue of nations is alone to be achieved. In the midst of alarm excited by the extent of the revolt, of ignorance from the novelty of the crisis, and of indecision from the dread of responsibility, he stood firm. The original intrepidity of his nature was even strengthened by the perils of the time; and with the whole storm of unpopularity roaring round him, he sternly pursued his course, and combated the surge, until it subsided; and the state vessel neared, if it did not yet enter, the harbour.

It is the natural fate of such men, in such times, to be misunderstood, and to be maligned. The libel which cast every stone within its reach at his living name, long continued to heap them on his grave. But all this has passed away, and the manlier portion of his countrymen now appeal to the administration of the "Great Chancellor," as proof of the national capacity for the highest trusts of empire.

Why has not the history of this man, and of his day, been written? Why has not some generous spirit, impelled alike by a sense of justice and a sense of patriotism, adopted this argument for the intellectual opulence and moral energy, which may still exist in the Irish mind? Is there no descendant, to claim the performance of a duty, which would reflect a lustre on himself, from the light which his

filial piety threw round the sepulchre? Or why are the recollections of rebels, to be taken down from the gibbet, and embalmed in history; while the name of him who smote the rebellion is suffered to moulder away?

I am not writing a panegyric. He had his infirmities; his temper was too excitable, and his measures were too prompt, for prudence. But his heart was sound, and his genius was made for the guidance of a state in the hour of its danger. If a feeblér mind had then presided in the public councils, Ireland, within a twelvemonth, would have been a republic; and in every hour since, would have been agonizing under the daggers of rival factions, or paying the fearful price of her frenzy in indissoluble chains.

If this were the single act of his life, it was sufficient for his fame. It is enough to inscribe on the mausoleum of any man, that "he rescued his country from a DEMOCRACY!"

The first news of the revolt which reached England, produced a formidable effect on the legislature. Even the sagacity of the premier had been deceived, and his cabinet evidently staggered from the effect of the surprise. Opposition had been equally startled, and were still more perplexed in their decision. Dealing for years in all the high-sounding topics of national wrong and national difficulty, they were now astonished at the first actual realization of popular revenge. The Englishman had heard of wars as the child hears of spectres—none had seen them, and the narratives served only to excite the imagination.

But the tremendous novelty of revolt was now at their doors. Whether the Irish revolvers acted in concert with the undying hostility of France, or with the factious reform of England; the danger in either case assumed a shape of the most appalling magnitude. Opposition, in the very prospect of power, now shrank from possession; as the stormers of a fortress might start back, when they saw the walls rolling down before them in some sudden convulsion of nature. They had predicted every casualty which could befall a country, while it was ruled by a cabinet inexorably closed against themselves. But when their predictions had changed character from the fantastic and remote into the substantial and immediate—when the storm which they so often predicted to be advancing over the prosperity of the land, seemed to have suddenly rushed forward, condensed and darkened with the full freight of national havoc; they as suddenly flew to take shelter in utter inaction, and left the minister to meet the gale.

Pitt was soon equal to the crisis. The orders which he dispatched to Ireland were stamped with all the considerate vigour of his matchless ability. I had sent him all the information which could be obtained, of the progress and purposes of the revolt, with the suggestions arising from the contingency. His remarks on my communication were brief, but incomparably clear, direct, and decided. Their tenor was, that I should distinguish accurately between the deluded and the deluders—that I should assure the loyal of the unhesitating support of England—and that, in all instances, I should cultivate the national

loyalty, reward the generous obedience, and sympathize with all the gallant and high-toned qualities of a people, with whom every thing was to be done, by taking an interest in their feelings. These principles were so entirely my own, that I acted upon them with double zeal, and with consequent success. The loyalty of Ireland rapidly exhibited itself in the most willing sacrifices; all ranks of opinion coincided in the necessity of bold and instant action; and from day to day, party, absorbed in the sense of the national exigency, disappeared.

The leading men on both sides of the House ranged themselves in the ranks of the voluntary corps which came forward to assist in the public defence, and the fine metaphor which had once made the senate thunder with applause—"The serpent's teeth, sown in the ground, sprang up armed men,"—was now amply, but more fortunately, realized. The bitterness and schisms of public opinion were buried in the earth, and the harvest was a brave and spontaneous armament, of men prepared to undergo all hazards for the sake of their country.

"Happy," says the French wit, "the land which has nothing for history." This happiness has never belonged to Ireland. Her annals are a stern romance. But the period of which I speak exhibited her senatorial strength with an energy, almost compensating for her popular misfortunes. While Parliament in England languished, parliament in Ireland started into sudden power. It was aroused by the visible presence of the public peril. Ireland was the outpost, while England was the camp; there the strug-

gle was at its height, while the great English brigade moved up slowly from the rear. The ardour and activity of the national temperament were exercised in perpetual conflict, and every conflict produced some new champion.

The actual construction of the senate house stimulated the national propensity for display. The House of Commons was an immense circular hall, surmounted with a lofty dome. A gallery supported by columns was formed round the base of the dome, with seats for seven hundred persons, but on crowded occasions capable of containing more; the whole highly ornamented, and constituting a rotunda, uniting grandeur with remarkable architectural elegance. Thus every member acted in the sight of a large audience, however thin might be the assemblage below; for the curiosity attached to the debates was so powerful, that the spacious gallery was always full. But the nature of that audience offered the still stronger temptation to the bold extravagances of the Irish temperament. The chief portion of this auditory were females, and those the most distinguished of Ireland; women of wit, beauty, and title, the leaders of fashion, and often the most vivid and zealous partizans in politics—of all audiences, the most hazardous to the soberness of public deliberation. As if with the express purpose of including every element adverse to the calmness of council, the students of the neighbouring university also possessed the privilege of *entrée* to the gallery; and there, with the heated imaginations of youth, and every feeling trained by the theories of Greek and Roman

republicanism, they sat, night after night, watching the ministerial movements of a harassed monarchy.

What must be the condition of a minister, rising before such an auditory, to pronounce the grave doctrines of public prudence ; to oppose argument to brilliant declamation ; to proclaim regulated obedience, in the midst of spirits fantastic as the winds ; and to lay restraints, essential to the public peace, on a population proud of their past defiances, and ready to welcome even civil war ? I was not conscious of any natural timidity ; nor have I ever found occasion to distrust my nerve on any great demand ; but I must acknowledge, that when, in some of the leading debates of that most absorbing and most perilous period, I rose to take the initiative ; the sight of the vast audience to whom I raised my eyes, was one of the severest trials of my philosophy. The members round me excited no alarm ; with them I was prepared to grapple ; it was a contest of argument ; I had facts for their facts, answers for their captiousness, and a fearless tongue for their declamation. But the gallery thus filled was beyond my reach ; its passions and prejudices were inaccessible to any logic of mine ; and I stood before them, less as in the presence of a casual auditory than of a tribunal, and at that tribunal, less as an advocate than as a culprit, on the point of being arraigned.

Another peculiar evil resulted from the admission of this crowd, and of its composition. Every casual collision of debate became personal. The most trivial play of pleasantry was embittered into an insult ; the

simplest sting of passing controversy was often to be healed only by a rencounter in the field; for the whole was acted on a public stage, with the *élite* of the nation looking on the performance. The hundreds of bright eyes glancing down from the gallery, were critics whose contempt was not to be resisted; and no public assembly, since the days of the Polish pospolite, ever settled so many points of debate, in the shape of points of honour.

At length Opposition rallied, and resolved to make a general assault upon the Administration. Like their English friends, they had been stunned for a while by the suddenness of the outbreak. But, as the Turkish populace, in a conflagration or the plague, no sooner recover from their first fright, than they discover the cause in the government, and march to demand the head of the vizier; the popular orators had no sooner found leisure to look round them, than they marshalled their bands, and demanded the dismissal of all antagonist authority. *I* was first to be torn down. *I* stood in the gate, and while *I* held the keys, there was no entrance for expectant ambition. *I* waved the flag in the breach, and until the banner was swept away, the storm was ineffectual. Yet this flinging of the whole weight of party vindictiveness on my head, gave me a new courage, the courage of passion, the determination which arises from a sense of injury, and the vigour which grows with the magnitude of the trial. In other times, *I* might have abandoned the struggle; but, with the eyes of a nation thus brought upon me, and

all the ablest men of the opposite benches making my overthrow the very prize of victory, I determined "to stand the hazard of the die."

The eventful night came at last; for days before, every organ of public opinion was in the most feverish activity; lampoons, pamphlets, and letters to the leading journals, the whole machinery of the paragraph world was in full work round me; and even the Administration despaired of my being able to resist the uproar—all but one, and that one the noblest and the most gifted of them all, my friend the chancellor. I had sat long past midnight with him on the eve of the coming struggle; and I received his full approval of my determination. He talked with all his usual loftiness, but with more than his usual feeling.

"Within the next twenty-four hours," said he, "your fate will be decided. But, in public life, the event is not the dishonour; it is the countenance with which we meet it, that makes all the difference between success and shame.—If you fall, you will fall like a man of character. If you triumph, your success will be unalloyed by any baseness of purchase." I told him sincerely, that I saw in the vigour and resolution of his conduct a model for public men. "However the matter may turn out in the debate," said he, rising and taking his leave, "there shall be no humiliation in the conduct of government, even if we should be defeated. Persevere to the last. The world is all chances, and ten to one of them are in favour of the man, who is resolved not to be frightened out of any thing. Farewell."

Still, the crisis was a trying one, and my occupa-

tion during the day was but little calculated to smooth its anxieties. The intelligence from the country announced the increased extent of the revolt; and the intercepted correspondence gave startling proof of an organization altogether superior to the rude tumults of an angry peasantry. Several sharp encounters had taken place with the soldiery, and in some of them, the troops, scattered in small detachments and unprepared, had suffered losses. Insurrectionary proclamations had been issued, and the revolt was already assuming a military form; camps were collected on the mountains, and the arming of the population was become general. My day was occupied in writing hurried despatches to the magistrates and officers in command of the disturbed districts; until the moment when the debate was expected to begin.

On my way to the House, every thing round me conspired to make a gloomy impression on my mind, weary and dark as it was already. Public alarm was at its height, and the city, with the usual exaggerations of undefined danger, presented the appearance of a place about to be taken by storm. The streets were crowded with people hurrying in search of news, or gathered in groups retailing what they had obtained, and evidently filled with the most formidable conceptions of the public danger. The armed yeomanry were hurrying to their stations for the night, patrols of cavalry were moving out to scour the environs, and the carriages of the gentry from the adjoining counties were driving to the hotels, crowded with children and domestics; while waggons loaded with the furniture of families resident in the metropolis,

were making their way for security into the country. All was confusion, hurry, and consternation. The look of a great city in alarm is absolutely inconceivable but by those who have been on the spot. It singularly harassed and disturbed me ; and at length, for the purpose of escaping the whole sight and sensation together, I turned from the spacious range of streets which led to the House ; and made my way along one of the narrow and obscure lanes which, by a libel on the national taste, were still suffered to remain, in the vicinity of an edifice worthy of the days of Imperial Rome.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“ Virtue may be assail’d, but never hurt ;
Yea, even that which mischief meant most harm
Shall, in the happy trial, prove most glory.
But, evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness ; when, at last,
Gather’d like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal, restless change,
Self-fed, and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillar’d firmament is rottenness,
And earth’s base built on stubble.”

MILTON.

My choice was an unlucky one, for I had scarcely gone a hundred yards, when I found my passage obstructed by a crowd, evidently waiting with some sinister purpose. A signal was given, and I was called on to answer. I had no answer to make ; but required, that I should be suffered to pass on. “ A spy, a spy ! down with him ! ” was the exclamation of a dozen voices. A rush was made upon me, and notwithstanding my struggle to break through, I was overwhelmed, grasped by the arms, and hurried into the entrance of a house in utter darkness. I expected only a dagger in my heart, and from the mut-

tered tones and words which escaped my captors, not one of whom could I discern, I seemed evidently about to encounter the fate of the spy which they deemed me. But, convinced that nothing was to be gained by submission, I loudly demanded, by what right I was seized, declared myself a member of Parliament, and threatened them with the especial vengeance of the law, for obstructing me in the performance of my duty.

This announcement evidently had its effect, at least in changing the subject of their consultation; and, after another whisper, one of their number stepped up to me, and said that I must follow him. My refusal brought the group again round me, and I was forced down the stairs, and through a succession of airless and ruined vaults, until we reached a massive door. There a signal was given, and was answered from within; but the door continued closed.

My emotions during all this period were agonizing. I might not have felt more than others that fear of death which belongs to human nature; but death, in darkness, without the power of a struggle, or the chance of my fate being ever accounted for; death by the hands of assassins, and in a spot of obscure butchery, was doubly appalling. But an hour before, I had been the first man in the country, and now what was I? an unhappy object of ruffian thirst of blood, destined to die in a charnel, and be tossed among the rubbish of ruffian haunts, to moulder unknown.

Without condescending to implore, I now strongly attempted to reason with my captors, on the atrocity of offering violence to a stranger, and on the cer-

tainty that they would gain more by giving me my liberty, than they possibly could by burying their knives in my bosom. But all was in vain.—They made no reply. One conception alone was wanting to the torture of the time; and it came. I heard through the depth of the vaults the sound of a church clock striking “eight.” It was the very hour which had been agreed on for commencing the debate of the night. What must be thought of my absence? What answer could be made to any enquiry for my presence? What conceivable refuge could my character as a minister have, from the charge of scandalous neglect, or more scandalous pusillanimity; from treachery to my friends, or from an utter insensibility to personal honour and official duty in myself? The thought had nearly deprived me of my senses. The perspiration of mental torment ran down my face. I stamped the ground, and would have dashed my forehead against the wall, had not the whole group instantly clung round me. A few moments more of this wretchedness, and I must have died; but the door at length was cautiously opened. I saw lights and human beings, and I bounded in.

At a long narrow table, on which were a few lights, and several books and rolls of paper, sat about twenty men, evidently of the lower order, though one or two exhibited a marked superiority to the rest. A case of pistols lay on the table, which had probably been brought out on the signal of my arrival; and in the corners of the room, or rather vault, were several muskets and other weapons piled against the wall. From the obvious disturbance of the meeting, I was clearly an unwelcome guest; and, after a general

sweep of the papers off the table, and a whisper which communicated to the chairman the circumstances of my capture, I was asked my name, and "why I had intruded on their meeting?" To the latter question my reply was an indignant demand, "why my liberty had been infringed on?" To the former, I gave my name and office at full length, and in a tone of authority. No announcement could have been more startling. The president actually sprang from his chair; others plucked out knives and pistols; all looked pallid and thunderstruck. With the first minister of the realm in this cavern of conspirators, every life of whom was in the peril of the axe; my presence among them was like the dropping of a shell into a powder magazine.

But the dismay soon passed; their native daring returned, and I saw that my fate hung once more on the balance. After a brief consultation, and many a gloomy glance at their prisoner, the president summed up the opinion of the board. "You must be sensible, sir," said he, addressing me, "that in times like the present, every man must be prepared to make sacrifices for his cause. The call of Ireland has summoned us here—that call is irresistible; and whatever may be our feelings for you, sir, who have been brought into this place wholly without our desire, the interests of a great country, determined to be free, must not be put in competition with the life of any individual, be his rank what it may." He paused, but a general murmur of applause showed the full approval of his grim auditory.

"You, sir," he continued, with the solemnity of a

judge passing sentence, "are one great obstacle to the possession of our public rights.—You are a man of talents and courage, and so much the more dangerous to the patriot cause. You would disdain our folly, if we threw away the chance which fortune has put into our hands ;—you must die. If we were in your power, the scaffold would be our portion. You are now in ours, and the question between us is decided." I felt, from his tone, that all remonstrance was useless ; and I scorned to supplicate. "Do as you will," I indignantly exclaimed. "I make but one request. It is, that no imputation shall be suffered to rest on my memory ; that the manner of my death shall be made known ; and that no man shall ever be suffered to believe that I died a coward or a traitor." "It shall be done," slowly pronounced the president.

I heard the click of a lock, and looking up at the sound, saw one of the sitters at this board of terror, without moving from his place, deliberately levelling a pistol at my head.—I closed my eyes.

At the next instant, I heard a scuffle ; the pistol was knocked out of his hand, and a voice hurriedly exclaimed, "Are you all mad ? For what purpose is this butchery ? Whom are you about to murder ? Do you want to bring a curse upon our cause ?" All rose in confusion ; but the stranger made but one spring to the spot where I stood, and fixing his eyes on me with astonishment, loudly repeated my name. As the light fell on him, I recollected at once, though his hat was deeply drawn over his eyes, and a huge cloak was wrapped round him, palpably for

the purpose of concealment, the rebel leader whom I had so strangely met before. He turned to the table. "And is it in this infamous way," he fiercely exclaimed, "that you show your love of liberty? Is it in blood that you are to dip your charter? is it in making every man of common sense despise, and every man of humanity hate you, that you are to look for popular good-will? Down with your daggers and pistols! The first man who dares to use them, I declare a traitor to his country!" His energy made an impression; and giving me his hand, which, even in that anxious moment, I could perceive to be as cold as stone, he pronounced the words, "Sir, you are free!" But, for this they were not prepared; and some exclamations rose, in which they seemed to regard him as false to the cause, and the words—"sold," and "traitor," were more than once audible.

He flamed out at the charge, and passionately demanded proofs. He then touched another string. "Now, listen to what I have to tell you, and then call me traitor, if you will.—You are in the jaws of ruin. I have but just discovered, that Government has obtained a knowledge of your meeting; and that, within five minutes, every man of you will be arrested. I flew to save you; now, judge of my honour to the cause. You have only to make your escape, and thank the chance which has rescued your lives." Still, my safety was incomplete. There were furious spirits among them, who talked of revenge for the blood already shed; and graver spirits, who insisted on my being kept as a hostage. But my protector

declaimed so powerfully, on the folly of exacting terms from me under duress; on the wisdom of appealing to my generosity, in case of reverses; and, above all, on the certainty of their falling into the hands of authority, if they wasted time in quarrelling as to my disposal; that he again brought them to a pause. A loud knocking at the door of one of the distant vaults, and a sound like the breaking down of the wall, gave a sudden success to his argument; and the meeting, snatching up their papers and weapons, glided away as silently as so many shadows.

I naturally attempted to thank my protector; but he put his finger to his lip, and pointed to the quarter from which the police were apparently forcing their way into the subterranean. It was clearly a time of peril for himself as well as his associates, and I followed him silently through the windings of this hideous locale. We shortly reached the open air, and I cannot describe the glad and grateful sense with which I saw the sky above my head, the lights glimmering in the windows, and felt that I was once more in the land of the living. My conductor led me within sight of the door of the House of Commons, and, with a slight pressure of the hand, turned from me, and was lost among the crowd. I rushed in; exhausted, overpowered, sinking with apprehension of the evil which might have been done in my absence, and blushing at the shame which probably awaited me.

But, I was fortunately disappointed. By some means, which I could never subsequently ascertain, a rumour of my seizure had reached the House; and

the strongest alarm was excited by the dread of my assassination. The commencement of the debate was suspended. Opposition, with the dignified courtesy which distinguished their leaders, even proposed the adjournment of their motion; the messengers of the House were dispatched in all directions, to bring some tidings of me; and I had afterwards the satisfaction to find, that none imputed my absence to any motive unbecoming my personal or official honour. Thus, when I entered the House, nervous with apprehension, I was received with a general cheer; my colleagues crowded round me with enquiries and congratulations; members crossed from the opposite benches to express their welcome. The glittering crowd, the galaxy of the lovely in the gallery, which the expectation of the great debate had filled with all the fashionable portion of the capital; chiefly, too, in full dress, as was the custom of the time; glanced down approvingly on me; and, when at last I took my seat, I felt myself flattered by being the centre of one of the most splendid and interesting assemblies in the world.

The House was at length hushed, and Grattan rose. I cannot revert to the memory of that extraordinary man, without a mixture of admiration and melancholy—admiration for his talents, and melancholy from the feeling, that such talents should expire with the time, and be buried in the common dust of the sepulchre. As a senatorial orator, he was incontestably the greatest, whom I have ever heard. With but little pathos, and with no pleasantry, I never heard any man so universally, perpetually, and

powerfully, command the attention of the House. There was the remarkable peculiarity in his language, that, while the happiest study of others is to conceal their art, his simplicity had the manner of art. It was keen, concentrated, and polished, by nature. His element was grandeur; the plainest conception, in his hands, assumed a loftiness and power which elevated the mind of his hearers, as much as it convinced their reason. As it was said of Michael Angelo, that every touch of his chisel was life, and that he struck out features and forms from the marble with the power of a creator; Grattan's mastery of high conceptions was so innate, that he invested every topic with a sudden magnitude, which gave the most casual things a commanding existence to the popular eye. It was thus, that the grievance of a casual impost, the delinquencies of a police, the artifices of an election, or the informalities of a measure of finance, became under his hand historic subjects; immortal themes, and recollections of intellectual triumph. If the Pyramids were built to contain the dust of nameless kings and sacrificed cattle; his eloquence erected over materials equally transitory, memorials equally imperishable.

His style has been criticised, and been called affected and epigrammatic. But, what is style to the true orator? His triumph is effect—what is to him its compound? What is it to the man who has the thunderbolt in his hands, of what various, nay, what earthly, nay, what vaporous, material it may be formed? Its blaze, its rapidity, and its penetration, are its essential value; the result is all in all.

If it overwhelms, and consumes ; who can doubt its innate power ?

But, Grattan was an orator by profession ; and the only one of his day. The great English speakers adopted oratory, simply as the means of their public superiority. Pitt's was the oratory of a ruler of empire ; with Fox, oratory was the strong, massive, and yet flexible, instrument of a leader of party. But, with Grattan it was a faculty, making a portion of the man, scarcely connected with external things, and neither curbed nor guided by the necessities of his political existence. If Grattan had been born in the backwoods, he would have been an orator, and have been persuasive among the men of the hatchet and the rifle. Wherever the tongue of man could have given superiority, or the richest flow and force of conception could have given pleasure, he would have attained eminence and dispensed delight. If he had not found an audience, he would have addressed the torrents and the trees ; he would have sent forth his voice to the inaccessible mountains, and have appealed to the inscrutable stars.

It is admitted, that in the suffering condition of Ireland, he had a prodigious opportunity ; but, among thousands of bold, ardent, and intellectual men, what is his praise, who alone rushes to their front, and seizes the opportunity ? The English rule over the sister country had been charged sometimes as tyranny, which was a libel ; and sometimes as injustice, which was an error ; but it had an unhappy quality, which embraced the evils of both—it was invidious. The only map of Ireland which lay before

the English cabinet of the eighteenth century, was the map of the sixteenth—a chart spotted with the gore of many battles, not the less bloody, that they were obscure; and disfigured with huge, discoloured spaces of barbarism. They forgot the lapse of time, and that time had since covered the graves of the past with a living race, and was filling up the swamps of the wilderness with the vigour and the passions of a new and glowing people. They still governed on the guidance of the obsolete map; and continued to administer a civilized nation, with the only sceptre fit for barbarism, the sword. By a similar misconception; while they declared the islands one indivisible empire, they governed them on the principle of eternal separation. No Irishman was ever called across the narrow strait between the two countries, to take a share in the offices, or enjoy the honours of England. Irish ambition, thwarted in its own country, might wander for ever; like Virgil's unburied ghosts; on the banks of the Irish Channel, without a hope of passing that political Styx. The sole connexion of the islands was between Whitehall and the Castle—between power and placemen—between cabinets and viceroys. It never descended to the level of the nation. It was a slight and scarcely visible communication, a galvanic wire, significant only at the extremities; a correspondence in cypher, instead of a public language—instead of a bond of heart with heart—instead of an amalgamation of people with people. Posterity will scarcely believe, that the neglect of unity, should have so nearly approached to the study of separation. Even the coin of the two countries was

different in impress and in value—the privileges of trade were different—the tenure of property was different—the regulations of the finance (things which penetrate through all ranks) were different—and a whole army of revenue officers were embodied to carry on those commercial hostilities. The shores of the “Sister Islands” presented to each other the view of rival frontiers; and the passage of a fragment of Irish produce was as impracticable, as if it had been contraband of war.

It was Grattan, who first broke down this barrier, and he thus rendered the mighty service, of doubling the strength of the empire; perhaps rendered the still mightier service, of averting its separation and its ruin. As the nation had grown strong, it had grown sullen; its disgust was ripening into wrath; and its sense of injury might speedily have sought its relief in national revenge. And yet, it is only justice to acknowledge, that this evil arose simply from negligence on the part of England; that there was no design of tyranny, none of the capriciousness of superiority, none of the sultan spirit in the treatment of the people.

But, no minister had yet started up in English councils, capable of the boldness of throwing open the barrier; none, of intellectual stature sufficient to look beyond the old partition wall of the countries; no example of that statesmanlike sagacity which discovers in the present the forms of the future, and pierces the mists, which, to inferior minds, magnify the near into giant size, while they extinguish the distant altogether. Still, no man can ever write the

annals of England, without a growing consciousness, that magnanimity has been the instinct of her dominion; that she has been liberal on principle, and honest by nature; that, even in the chilliest and darkest hour of her sovereignty, this influence has existed unimpaired; and like the influence of gravitation on the globe, that it has accompanied and impelled her, day and night alike, through the whole circuit of her proud and powerful career.

This was the glorious period of Grattan's public life. His task, by universal confession, was the noblest that could be enjoined on man, and he sustained it with powers fitted to its nobleness. On the later portion of his history, I have no desire to touch. The most hazardous temptation of early eminence, is the fondness which it generates for perpetual publicity. The almost preternatural trial of human fortitude is, to see faction, with its vulgar and easy triumph, seizing on the fame, which was once to be won only by the purest and rarest achievements of patriotism. When the banner which had flamed at the head of the nation, on their march to Right, and which was consigned to the hand of Grattan as its legitimate bearer; was raised again, by inferior hands, in a day threatening the subversion of every throne in Europe; he exhibited a jealousy of his obscure competitors, unworthy of his renown. But, he did not join in their procession. He was unstained. If he felt the avarice of ambition, he stooped to none of the meannesses of intrigue; he disdained the darkness and the cowardice of conspiracy: to the last, he exhibited no decay of that original dignity of nature,

which, in his political nonage, had made him the leader of bearded men, and his name survives, a model to the maturity of his country's virtue.

On this night, he spoke with remarkable power, but in a style wholly distinct from his former appeals to the passions of the House. His accents, usually sharp and high, were now lingering and low; his fiery phraseology was solemn and touching, and even his gesture, habitually distorted, and pantomimical, was subdued and simple. He seemed to labour under an unavowed impression, of the share which the declamatory zeal of his party had to lay to its charge in the national peril.

Yet, I never saw more expressive evidence of his genius, than on this night of universal consternation. His language, ominous and sorrowful, had the tone of an oracle, and was listened to like an oracle. No eye or ear strayed from him for a moment, while he wandered dejectedly among the leading events of the time; throwing a brief and gloomy light over each in passing, as if he carried a funeral lamp in his hand, and was straying among tombs. This was to me a wholly new aspect of his extraordinary faculties. I had regarded rapidity, brilliancy, and boldness of thought, as his inseparable attributes; but his speech was now a magnificent elegy. I had seen him, when he furnished my mind almost with the image of some of those men of might and mystery, sent to denounce the guilt, and heap coals of fire on the heads of nations. He now gave me the image of the prophet, lamenting over the desolation, which he had once proclaimed, and depre-

cating less the crimes than the calamities of the land of his nativity. I never was more struck with the richness and variety of his conceptions, but their sadness was sublime.

Again, I desire to guard against the supposition, that I implicitly did homage to either his talents, or his political views. From the latter, I often and deeply dissented; in the former I could often perceive the infirmity, that belongs even to the highest natural powers. He was no "faultless monster." I am content to recollect him, as a first-rate human being. He had enemies, and may have them still. But, all private feelings are hourly more and more extinguished in the burst of praise, still ascending round the spot where his dust is laid.—Time does ultimate justice to all, and, while it crumbles down the fabricated fame, only clears and separates the solid renown from the common level of things. The foibles of human character pass away. The fluctuations of the living features are forgotten in the fixed majesty of the statue; and the foes of the living man unite in carrying the memorial of the mighty dead to its place in that temple, where posterity comes to refresh its spirit, and elevate its nature, with the worship of ancestral genius and virtue.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“ Thy cheek is pale with thought—but not from woe ;
And yet so lovely, that if mirth could flush
Its rose of whiteness with the brightest blush,
My heart would wish away that ruder glow
And dazzle not thy deep blue eyes ; but—oh !
While gazing on them, sterner eyes will gush,
And into mine my mother’s weakness rush,
Soft as the last drops round Heaven’s airy bow ;
For, through thy dark, long lashes low depending,
The soul of melancholy Gentleness
Gleams, like a seraph, from the sky descending,
Above all pain, yet pitying all distress.”

BYRON.

THE speech of the Opposition leader decided the question.—No man on his side would venture beyond the line which he had drawn ; and the resolutions of Government were triumphantly carried ; after a brief appeal from me to the loyalty and manliness of the House. I placed before them the undeniable intention of the cabinet to promote the public prosperity ; the immeasurable value of unanimity in the parliament, to produce confidence in the people, and the magnitude of the stake, for which England

and Ireland were contending with the enemy of Europe. Those sentiments were received with loud approval; my language was continually echoed during the debate, I was congratulated on all sides; and this night of expectancy and alarm closed in a success, which relieved me from all future anxiety for the fate of the Government.

The House broke up earlier than usual; and, to cool the fever which the events of the night had produced in my veins, I rambled into one of the spacious squares which add so much to the ornament of that fine city. The night was serene, the air blew fresh and flower-breathing from the walks, the stars shone in their lustre, and I felt all the power of nature to soothe the troubled spirit. Some of the fashionable inhabitants of the surrounding houses had been induced by the fineness of the night, to prolong their promenade; and the light laugh, and the sound of pleasant voices, added to the touching and simple charm of the scene. A group had stopped round a player on the guitar, with which he made a tolerable accompaniment to some foreign songs. My ear was caught by a chorus which I had often heard among the French peasantry, and I joined in the applause. The minstrel was ragged and pale, and had evidently met with no small share of the buffets of fortune; but, cheered by our approval, he volunteered to sing the masterpiece of his collection—"The Rising of the Vendée"—the rallying-song of the insurrection, a performance chanted by the Vendéan army in the field, by the Vendéan

peasant in his cottage, and which he now gave us with all the enthusiasm of one who had fought and suffered in the cause.

THE RISING OF THE VENDEE.

It was a Sabbath morning, and sweet the summer air,
And brightly shone the summer sun upon the day of prayer ;
And silver-sweet the village bells o'er mount and valley toll'd,
And in the church of St. Florènt were gather'd young and old.
When rushing down the woodland hill, in fiery haste was seen,
With panting steed and bloody spur, a noble Angevin.
And bounding on the sacred floor, he gave his fearful cry,—
“ Up, up for France ! the time is come, for France to live or die.

“ Your Queen is in the dungeon ; your King is in his gore ;
On Paris waves the flag of death, the fiery Tricolor ;
Your nobles, in their ancient halls, are hunted down and slain,
In convent cells and holy shrines, the blood is pour'd like rain.
The peasant's vine is rooted up, his cottage is on flame,
His son is to the scaffold sent, his daughter sent to shame ;
With torch in hand, and hate in heart, the rebel host is nigh.
Up, up for France ! the time is come, for France to live or die.”

That livelong night the horn was heard, from Orleans to Anjou,
And pour'd from all their quiet fields our shepherds bold and true ;
Along the pleasant banks of Loire shot up the beacon-fires,
And many a torch was blazing bright on Lucon's stately spires ;
The midnight cloud was flush'd with flame, that hung o'er Par-
thenaye,

The blaze that shone o'er proud Brissac was like the breaking day ;
Till east and west, and north and south, the loyal beacons shone,
Like shooting-stars, from haughty Nantz to sea-begirt Olonne.

And through the night, on foot and horse, the sleepless summons
flew,

Till morning saw the Lily-flag wide waving o'er Poitou ;
And many an ancient musketoon was taken from the wall,
And many a jovial hunter's steed was harness'd in the stall ;
And many a noble's armoury gave up the sword and spear,
And many a bride, and many a babe, was left with kiss and tear ;

And many a homely peasant bade "farewell" to his old "dame;"
As in the days, when France's king unfurl'd the Oriflame.

There, leading his bold marksmen, rode the eagle-eyed Lescure,
And dark Stofflet, who flies to fight, as falcon to the lure;
And, fearless as the lion roused, but gentle as the lamb,
Came, marching at his people's head, the brave and good Bon-champs.

Charette, where honour was the prize, the hero sure to win;
And there, with Henri Quatre's plume, the young Rochejaquelein.
And there, in peasant speech and garb—the terror of the foe,
A noble made by Heaven's own hand, the great Cathelineau.

We march'd by tens of thousands on, we march'd through day and
night,

The Lily standard in our front, like Israel's holy light.
Around us roam'd the rebels, as the wolf around the sheep,
We burst upon their columns, as the lion roused from sleep;
We tore the bayonets from their hands, we slew them at their guns,
Their boasted horsemen flew like chaff before our forest-sons;
That eve we heap'd their baggage high, their lines of dead between,
And in the centre blazed to heaven their blood-dyed Guillotine!

In vain they hid their heads in walls; we rush'd on stout Thouar,
What cared we for its shot or shell, for battlement or bar?
We burst its gates; then, like the wind, we rushed on Fontenaye,
We saw its flag at morning's light,—'twas ours by setting day.
We crush'd, like ripen'd grapes, Montreuil, we tore down old
Vetier—

We charged them with our naked breasts, and took them with a
cheer.

We'll hunt the robbers through the land, from Seine to sparkling
Rhone.

Now, "Here's a health to all we love. Our king shall have his
own."

This song had an interest for me, independent of
the spirit of the performer. It revived recollections
of the noblest scene of popular attachment and faith-
ful fortitude since the days of chivalry. I heard in it
the names of all the great leaders of the Royalist

army—names which nothing but the deepest national ingratitude will ever suffer France to forget ; and it gave a glance at the succession of those gallant exploits by which the heroic peasantry and gentlemen of Anjou and Poitou had gained their imperishable distinction.

But the streets of a capital, itself almost in a state of siege, were not the scene for indulging in romance by starlight ; and one of the patrols of soldiery, then going its rounds, suddenly ordered the group to disperse. The Frenchman, unluckily, attempted to apologize for his own appearance on the spot ; and the attempt perplexed the matter still more. The times were suspicious, and a foreigner, and of all foreigners a Gaul, caught, under cover of night, singing songs of which the sergeant could not comprehend a syllable, was a personage in every way formed for the guard-house. The startled Frenchman's exclamations and wrath at discovering this purpose, only made the sergeant more positive ; and he was marched off, as a traitor convicted of guitar-playing, and other traitorous qualities.

I interposed, but my interposition was in vain. My person was unknown to the man in authority ; and I was evidently, from the frown of the sergeant, regarded as little better than an accomplice. My only resource was, to follow the party to the guard-house, and see the officer of the night. But, he was absent ; and half-laughing at the singular effect of the report in the morning, that I had been arrested as the fellow-conspirator of a French mendicant ; I called for pen, ink, and paper, to explain my position

by a message to the next magistrate. But, this request only thickened the perplexity. As I approached the desk to write, the prisoner bounded towards me with a wild outcry, flung his arms round my neck, and plunging his hand into the deepest recesses of his very wayworn costume, at length drew out a large letter, which he held forth to me with a gesture of triumph. The sergeant looked graver still; his responsibility was more heavily involved by the despatch, which he intercepted on the spot, and proceeded to examine; at least so far as the envelope was concerned. He and his guard pored over it in succession. Still it was unintelligible. It was a mysterious affair altogether. The Frenchman and I begged, equally in vain, to be allowed to interpret. Impossible. At length the subaltern on duty was found; and on his arrival I was released, with all due apologies, and carried off the captive and his despatch together.

The letter was addressed to me, in French, and in a hand with which I was unacquainted. To obtain any knowledge of its contents on my way home, or from its bearer, was out of the question; until, with a hundred circumlocutions, I had heard the full and entire hair-breadth 'scapes of Monsieur Hannibal Auguste Dindon. He had been the domestic of Madame la Maréchale de Tourville, and had attended her and the countess to England in the emigration; in England he had seen me. On the reduction of the Maréchale's household, he had returned to his own country, and taken service with the Royalist army in the Vendée. There, too, he had suffered

that "*fortune de la guerre*" which is ill-luck with every body, but the elastic Frenchman. He had been taken prisoner, and was on the point of being shot; when he saw the countess, a prisoner also in the Republican hands, who interceded for his safety, and gave him this letter, to be delivered to me, if he should escape. After following the march of the armies, a defeat scattered the Republican division along with which they were carried; he procured a conveyance for the Countess, to the coast of Brittany, and they embarked in one of the fishing vessels for England. Again ill-luck came; a storm caught them in the Channel, swept them, the crew knew not where, and finally threw them on the iron-bound shore of the west of Ireland.—Clotilde was now actually in the capital, on her way to England!

If ever there was wild joy in the heart of man, it was in mine at that intelligence. It was a flash of light, bright, bewildering, overwhelming!

I longed to be alone; to hear no sound of the human tongue, to indulge in the deep and silent delight of the overlaid heart. But M. Hannibal was not a personage, to be disappointed of his share of interest; and, to avoid throwing the honest prattler into absolute despair, I was forced to listen to his adventures; until the blaze of the lamps in the vice-regal residence, and the challenge of the sentries, reminded him, and me too, that there were other things in the world than a Frenchman's wanderings. The substance of his tale, however, was—that his resources having fallen short on the road, and resolving not to burden the finances of the countess, which he believed to be scarcely less exhausted

than his own, he had made use of his voice and guitar to recruit his purse—a chance which he now designated as a miracle, devised by the saint who presided over his birthday, to finish his perils, in all imaginable felicity.

Giving him into the care of my servants, I was at length alone. The letter was in my hand. Yet still I dreaded to break the seal. What might not be the painful sentiments and sorrowful remonstrances within that seal? But, Clotilde was living; was near me; was still the same confiding, generous, and high-souled being; sorrow and terror were now passed away.—I opened the letter. It was a detail of her thoughts, written in the few moments which she could snatch from the insulting surveillance round her; and was evidently intended less as a letter, than a legacy of her last feelings, written to relieve an overburdened heart, with but slight hope of its ever reaching my hand. It was written on various fragments of paper, and often blotted with tears. It began abruptly. I shuddered at the misery which spoke in every word.

“I am, at this hour, in the lowest depth of wretchedness. I have but one consolation, that no life can endure this agony long. After being carried from garrison to garrison, with my eyes shocked and my feelings tortured, by the sights and sufferings of war, I am at last consigned to the hands of the being, whom on earth I most dread and abhor. Montrecour has arrived, to take the command in Saumur. I have not yet seen him; but he has had the cruelty to announce, that I am his prisoner, and shall be his

wife. But the wife of Montrecour I never will be ; rather a thousand times would I wed the grave !—

“This letter may never reach your hands, or, if it does, it may only be when the great barrier is raised between us, and this heart shall be dust. Marston, shall I then be remembered ? Shall my faith, my feelings, and my sufferings, ever come across your mind ?—Let not Clotilde be forgotten. I revered, honoured, loved you.—I feel my heart beat, and my cheek burn at the words ; but I shall not recall them. On the verge of the future world, I speak with the truth of a spirit, and oh, with the sincerity of a woman !——

“From that eventful day when I first met your glance, I determined, that no power on earth should ever make me the wife of another. To me you remained almost a total stranger. Yet the die was cast. I finally resolved to abandon the world, to hide my unhappy head in a convent, and there, in loneliness and silence, endure, for I never could hope to extinguish, those struggles of heart which forced me to leave all the charms of existence behind, for ever.

“The loss of my beloved parent gave me the power of putting my resolution into effect. I returned to France, though in the midst of its distractions, and took refuge under the protection of my venerable relative, the superior of the convent at Valenciennes. My narrative is now brief, but most melancholy. On the evening of the day when I heard your love—a day which I shall remember with pride and gratitude to the closing hour of my existence—we were suffered to pass the gates, and take

the route for Italy. But, on the third day of our journey, we were stopped by a division of the Republican forces on their march to the Vendée. We were arrested as aristocrats, and moved from garrison to garrison, until we reached the Republican headquarters at Saumur; where, to my infinite terror, I found Montrecour governor of the fortress. He was a traitor to his unhappy king. The republic had offered him higher distinctions than he could hope to obtain from the emigrant princes, and he had embraced the offer. Betrothed to him in my childhood, according to the foolish and fatal custom of our country, I was still in some degree pledged to him. But, now no human bond shall ever unite me to one, whom I doubly disdain as a traitor. Still, I am in his power. What is there now to save me? I am at this moment in a prison!

“I hear the sounds of music and dancing on every side. The town is illuminated for a victory which is said to have been gained this morning over the troops of Poitou, advancing to the Loire. The stars are glittering through my casement with all the brilliancy of a summer sky; the breath of the fields flows sweetly in; laughing crowds are passing through the streets; and here am I, alone, friendless, broken-hearted, and dreading the dawn.—

“I spent the livelong night on my knees. Tears and prayers were my sole comfort during those melancholy hours. But time rolls on. Montrecour has just sent to tell me, that my choice must be made by noon—the altar or the guillotine. An escort is now preparing to convey prisoners to Nantes, where

the horrible Revolutionary Tribunal holds a perpetual sitting; and I must follow them, or be his bride! —Never! I have given my answer, and gladly I welcome my fate. I have solemnly bade farewell to this world.—

“No! My tyrant is not so merciful. He has this moment sent to ‘command’ (that is the word) —to command my presence in the church; ‘as he is about to march against the enemy, and he must be master of my hand before he takes the field.’ The troops are already preparing for the march. I hear the drums beating. But one short hour is given me to prepare.—Would I were dead!

“There are times when the soul longs to quit her tenement; when the brain sees visions; when the heart feels bursting; when a thousand weapons seem ready for the hand, and a voice of temptation urges to acts of woe.—Marston, Marston, where are you at this hour?”

The letter fell from my hands. I had the whole scene before my eyes. And where was I, while the one to whom every affection of my nature was indissolubly bound, this creature of beauty, fondness, and magnanimity, was wasting her life in sorrow, in captivity, in the bitterness of the broken heart? If I could not reproach myself with having increased her calamities, yet had I assuaged them? had I flown to her rescue; had I protected her against the cruelties of fortune; had I defied, sword in hand, the heartless and arrogant villain who had brought her into such hopeless peril? Those thoughts shot through my brain in torture, and it was some time before I could

resume the reading of the blotted lines upon my table. I dreaded their next announcement. I shrank from the pang of certainty. The next sentence might announce to me that Clotilde had been compelled by force to a detested marriage ;—I dared not hazard the knowledge.

Yet the recollection, that I was blameless in her trials, at length calmed me. I felt, that to protect her had been wholly out of my power, from the day when she left Valenciennes ; and, while I honoured the decision and loftiness of spirit which had led her to that self-denying step, I could lay nothing to my charge, but the misfortune of being unable to convince her mind of the wisdom of disdaining the opinion of the world. I took up the letter again.

“Another day has passed, of terror and anguish unspeakable. Yet it has closed in thanksgiving. I have been respited.—I was forced from my chamber. I was forced to the altar. I was forced to endure the sight of Montrecour at my side. A revolutionary priest stood prepared to perform the hateful ceremony. I resisted, I protested, I wept in vain. The chapel was thronged with revolutionary soldiers, who, regarding me as an aristocrat, were probably incapable of feeling any sympathy with my sufferings. I was hopeless. But, during the delay produced by my determination, to die rather than yield, I could see confusion growing among the spectators. I heard the hurried trampling of cavalry through the streets. Drums and trumpets began to sound in all quarters. The tumult evidently increased. I could perceive, even in the stony features of Montre-

cour, his perplexity at being detained from showing himself at the head of the troops ; and, with senses wound to their utmost pitch by the anxiety of the moment, I thought that I could hear the distant shouts of an immense multitude advancing to the walls. Aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp now came hurrying in ; each with a fresh summons to their general. He alternately threatened, insulted, and implored me. But, no measure or entreaty on earth could make me consent.

“ At length, I heard a heavy fire of cannon, followed by the shattering of houses and the outcries of the people. The batteries of the town soon returned the fire, and all was uproar. Montrecour, gnashing his teeth, and with the look and fury of a fiend, now rushed towards me, and bore me to the feet of the priest. I felt the light leaving my eyes, and hoped that I was dying. At that moment, a cannon-shot struck the steeple, and dashed down a large portion of its fragments on the floor. The priest and his attendants, thinking that the whole fabric was falling, made their escape. Montrecour, with an exclamation full of the bitterness of his soul, flung me from him, and, swearing that my respite should be brief, darted from the chapel, followed by the *soldiers*.—What words ever uttered by human lips can tell the gratitude, with which I saw myself left alone, and knelt upon that floor, covered with ruins!—

“ I am now on my way once more ; I know not whither. The battle continued during the day ; and the sights and sounds were almost too much for the human senses to bear. At night the Royalists stormed

the outworks of the fortress; and, to prevent our release in the capitulation, the prisoners were sent away in the darkness. As our carriage passed the gates, I saw Montrecour borne in, wounded. The spirit of the insulter was in him still. He ordered the soldiers to bring his litter near me, and in a voice faint through pain, but bitter with baffled revenge, he murmured—‘Countess, you shall not have long to indulge in your caprices. My hurts are trifling.—You are still in my power.’

“What a hideous desolation is war! We have just passed through one of the forest villages, which, but a few days since, must have been loveliness itself.—Vineyards, gardens, a bright stream, a rustic chapel on a hill—every thing shaped for the delight of the eye! But a desperate skirmish had occurred there between the retreating Republicans and their pursuers, and all that man could ruin was ruined. The cottages were all in ashes, the gardens trampled, the vineyards cut down for the fires of the bivouac, the chapel was even smouldering still, and the river exhibited some frightful remnants of what were once human beings. Not a living soul was to be seen. A dog was stretched upon the ground, tearing up with his paws what was probably the grave of his master. At the sight of the escort, he howled and showed his teeth, in evident fury at their approach; a dragoon fired his pistol at him; fortunately missed him; and the dog bounded into the thicket. But when I looked back, I saw him creep out again, and stretch himself howling upon the grave.

“I write these lines at long intervals, in fear, and

only when the escort are sleeping on their horses' necks, or eating their hurried meals upon the ground.

“Last night the Royalist army crossed the Loire; and the firing continued until morning. The heights all seemed crowned with flame. The forest in which we had stopped for the night, was set on fire in the conflict, and a large body of the Royalist cavalry skirmished with the retreating Republicans till morning.—It was a night of indescribable terror; but my personal fears were forgotten in sorrow for my honoured and aged companion. She often fainted in my arms; and in this wilderness, where every cottage is deserted, and where all is flight and consternation even among the soldiery; what is to become of her? I gazed upon her feeble frame and sinking countenance, with the certainty, that in a few hours all would be over.—How rejoicingly would I share the quiet of her tomb!”

My heart heaved, at a reality of wretchedness so deep, that I could scarcely conceive it to have passed away. My mind was in the forest. I saw the pursuit; the firing rang in my ears; and in the midst of this shock of flying and fighting men, I saw Clotilde wiping the dews of death from the brow of her helpless relative.

The illusion was even strengthened at this moment, by the flashing of a strong and sudden light across the ceiling of my chamber, and the trampling of a body of troops by torchlight, entering the Castle gates. A squadron of dragoons had arrived, escorting a carriage. Even my glance at the buildings of the

Castle-square could scarcely recall me to the truth of the locality ; until an aide-de-camp knocked at my door, with a request from the viceroy, that I should see him as soon as possible. Safely locking up my precious record, I followed him.

There was a ball on that night in the Castle, and our way to the private apartments of his excellency leading through the state saloon, the whole showy display struck upon my eyes at once. By what strange love of contrast is it, that the human mind is never more open to the dazzling effects of beauty, splendour, and gaiety, than when it has been wrapt in the profoundest sorrow ? Are the confines of joy and anguish so close ? Is there but a hair's-breadth intervention of some invisible nerve, some slender web of imagination, between mirth and melancholy ?

The Irish are a handsome race, and none more enjoy, or are more fitted by nature or temper, for all the ornamental displays of society ; a Castle ball was always a glittering exhilaration of lustre and beauty. But I had seen all this before. To-night they mingled with the tenderness which the perusal of Clotilde's letter had shed over all my feelings. As the dancers moved before my eye, as the music echoed round me, as I glanced on the walls, filled with the portraits of the viceroys, and the gallant and great, whose names still lived in the native history ; I imagined the lovely being, with whom I connected all my hopes of happiness, moving in the midst of that " charmed circle," in the splendours of her original rank, admired by all for her loveliness, and yet giving *me* the whole tribute of a noble heart, grateful

for the devotion of all mine to her happiness. I involuntarily paused, and, leaning against one of the Parian pillars of that stately hall, gave unrestrained way to my waking dream.

My conference with the viceroy was soon concluded. The prisoner had commanded a body of insurgents, who, after some partial successes, had been broken, and dispersed. The leader, in his desperate attempts to rally them, had been severely wounded, and was taken on the field. From the papers found on his person, an important clue to the principal personages and objects of the revolt was promised; and I proceeded to the place of temporary detention, to examine him on the rebellion.

What an utter breaking up of the vision which had so lately absorbed all my feelings. What a contrast was now before me, to the pomps and pleasures of the *fête*! On a table, in the guard-house, lay a human form, scarcely visible by the single dim light which flickered over it from the roof. Some of the dragoons, covered with the marks of long travel, were wearily lounging on the benches, or gazing on the unhappy countenance which lay, as if in sleep or death, before them. A sabre-wound had covered his forehead with gore, which, almost concealing all his features, rendered him a hideous spectacle. Even the troopers, though sufficiently indignant at the very name of rebel, either respected the singular boldness of his defence, or stood silenced by the appalling nature of the sight. The hope of obtaining any information from him was now given up; he was evidently insensible, and all that I could do

was done, by placing him in the care of the surgeons in attendance on the Household, and ordering that he should have every accommodation consistent with his safe-keeping for the time.

I returned to my chamber, and was again lost in the outpourings of a pen which had all the candour of a dying confession. Clotilde was again murmuring in my ear those solemn thoughts, which she believed that she was writing only to be trampled in the mazes of a French forest. Her last words were—

“Marston, Marston, we shall never meet again! In my days of wretchedness, I have sometimes wept over the resolution by which I tore myself away from you. But every calmer thought has strengthened me in the consciousness, that I could give no higher proof of the honour, the homage, the fond and fervent affection, of my soul. I dared not be a burden on your tenderness, or an obstacle to your natural distinction. What could I, helpless, houseless, fortuneless, be but a weight upon that generous ambition of eminence which marks superior natures for the superior honours of life? I relinquished the first object of my heart, and in that act I still take a melancholy pride. I showed you of what sacrifices I am capable for your sake. But what sacrifice is too vast for the heart of woman? Farewell! you will never see me more.

“CLOTILDE DE TOURVILLE.”

During that night I found it impossible to rest; I continued walking up and down my chamber, alter-

nately reading those fragments, and gazing on the skies. The cavalry torches still illumined the Castle-square; the blaze from the windows of the ball-room still poured its steady radiance on the gardens; and the pure serenity of a rising moon shone over all. Captivity, luxury, and the calm glory of the heavens, were at once before me. Feverish alike with pain and pleasure, pressed with the anxieties of state, and filled with solemn and almost spiritualized contemplation, I continued gazing from my casement, until the lights of the *fête* had decayed, and the moonbeams had grown pale before the first flush of dawn. The sounds of life now came upon the cool air, and I was again in the world.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“ O Heaven, look upon me ! How my heart,
After long desolation, now unfolds,
Unto this new delight ; to kiss thy hands,
Thou dearest, dearest one, of all the earth ;
To clasp thee with my arms, which were but thrown
On the void winds before ! Oh, give me way,
Give my soul's rapture way ; the living fount
Leaps not more brightly down, from cliff to cliff,
Of high Parnassus to the golden vale,
Than the strong joy bursts gushing through my heart.”

HEMANS.

THE eventful day was come—the day which I had longed for with such ceaseless impatience, through years of trial—the day of which, among scenes the most disturbing, the most perilous, or the most glittering, I had never lost sight for a moment—the day which I had followed with a fond and fixed eye, as the pilgrim gazes on the remote horizon where stands the shrine he loves. It was come at last ; and yet, such are the strange varieties and trembling sensibilities of human feelings, I now felt awed, uncertain, and almost alarmed, at its arrival. Before its close, I was to see the being in whom my existence was involved. When

I had met Clotilde last, her sentiments for me were as devoted as were those expressed in her letter ; yet she had repelled my declarations, sacrificed my happiness to a high-toned enthusiasm, and rejected all the supplications of an honourable heart, under the promptings of a spirit too noble to be called pride, yet with all the effect of the haughtiest disdain.

Still, the hour advanced, and I sent a note by her attendant, soliciting an interview. Her hotel was within a short distance ; yet no answer came. I grew more and more reluctant to approach her without her direct permission. There are thousands who will not comprehend this nervousness, but they are still ignorant of the power of real passion. True affection is the most timid thing in the world. At length, unable to endure this fever of the soul, I determined to make the trial at once, enter her presence, make a final declaration of all my hopes and fears, and hear my fate once for all.

I was on the point of leaving my chamber for the purpose, when a message from the viceroy stopped me. The prisoner whom I had seen brought in during the night, was to be examined before the privy council, and my presence was essential. Fate, or fortune, thus seemed always to thwart me. I followed the messenger. The prisoner was led into the council-room, just as I entered ; and at the first glance I recognized in him the unhappy being whom I had so strangely met in the North, and whose romance of rebellion had so deeply excited my interest.

His features, which, in the night, disfigured with dust and blood, I had been unable to distinguish,

now exhibited their original aspect, that cast of mingled melancholy and daring, which marked him at once as conscious of the perils of his career, and resolved to encounter them to the uttermost. His tribunal was formed of the first men of the country, and they treated him with the dignity of justice. His conduct was suitable to this treatment—calm, decided, and with more the manner of a philosopher delivering deliberate opinions on the theory of government, than of a desperate contemner of authority, and the head of a wide and fierce conspiracy against the settled order of things. He cast his deep and powerful glance round the council-board; as if to measure the capacities of the men with whom he had once prepared himself to contend for national supremacy; but I could not discover that he had any recollection of me. But, I knew him well; and if ever painter or sculptor had desired to fix in canvass or marble the “ideal” of stately conspiracy, there stood its model in the man before me. He spoke without the slightest appearance of alarm, and spoke long and ably, in explanation of his views; for he disdained all justification of them. He acknowledged their total failure, but still contended for their original probability of success, and for their natural necessity as the restoratives of Ireland.

He was listened to with a forbearance, alike arising from compassion for the fate which he had thus chosen, and respect for the singular talent which he displayed in this crisis of his fate. Man honours fortitude in all its shapes. The criminal was almost forgotten in the eloquent enthusiast; and while, with

his deep and touching voice, and eager but most expressive gestures, he poured out his glowing dreams, revelled in brilliant impossibilities, and created scenes of national regeneration, as high-coloured as the glories of a tropical sunset; they suffered him to take his full range, and develope the whole force of that vivid imagination, whose flame alike lured him into the most dangerous paths of political casualty, and blinded him to their palpable dangers. He concluded, by declaring a total contempt for life; pronouncing, that with the loss of his political hopes it had lost its value, and making but one request to the council, that, "since fortune had flung him into the hands of their law, its vengeance might be done upon him with the least possible delay."

He was now removed; and a feeling of regret, and even of admiration followed his removal. But his crime was undeniable, the disturbance of the public mind was too serious, to allow of any relaxation in the rigour of justice; and I gave my unwilling signature to his final commitment to the state prison.

I was now once again disengaged from the fetters of office; and, resolved not to spend another day of suspense, I drove to the hotel. I found it crowded with families which had fled from their houses in the country in the first alarm of the insurrection; and, in the midst of the good-humoured but unmanageable tumult of a great household of Irish strangers, was forced to find my own way at last. In passing along, my eye was caught by a valise laid outside one of the parlours, and corded, as for an immediate departure. It was marked with "La Comtesse de

Tourville." I knocked gently at the door. I was unanswered. I touched it—it gave way, and I stood on the threshold.

Before me, at a table, sat a female figure, writing, with her face turned from me, and apparently so deeply engaged as not to have heard my entrance. But I should have known her among a million. I pronounced her name. She started up, in evident alarm at the intrusion. But, in the next moment, her pale countenance was flushed by nature's richest rose, and she held forth her hand to me.—All my fears vanished with that look and the touch of that hand. All the language of earth could not have told me, half what they told at that moment. Of this I say no more. It was the golden moment of my life ; I make no attempt to describe our interview—to describe the indescribable.

I returned to the Castle a new being. The burden which had weighed so long upon my spirits was now removed. The root of bitterness, which continually sent up its noxious vegetation, in the midst of the most flattering hopes of my public existence, was now extirpated ; I was secure in the full confidence of one of the loveliest and the noblest-hearted of human beings.—And yet how narrowly had I escaped the loss of all ! Clotilde, hopeless of ever hearing of me more, had formed the determination to leave^e Ireland, on that day ; and weary of disappointed affections, and alienated from the world, to change her name, abjure her rank, and take the veil in one of the Italian convents connected with her family. I should thus have lost her for ever.

She had waited on this eventful day only for the return of her domestic. His arrest on the night before had deranged her plans; and when he had returned, his mixture of French verbiage and Irish raptures, his guard-house terrors and his Castle feasting, formed a *mélange* so unintelligible, that she was compelled to believe him under the influence of a spell—that spell which is supposed to inspire so much of the wit and wisdom of one of the cleverest and most *bizarre* regions of a moonstruck world. Even my note only added to her perplexity. It was given by Monsieur Hannibal with such a magniloquent description of the palace in which he found me, and which he fully believed to be my own—of the royal retinue surrounding my steps—of my staff of glittering officers, and the battalions and brigades of my body-guard; that while she smiled at his narrative, she was perfectly convinced of his derangement. But all this had luckily produced delay; and the hour came when her past anxieties were to be exchanged for the faith and fondness of one who knew her infinite value, and was determined to devote his life to embellishing and cheering every hour of her existence.

We were married; and I had the delight and honour of introducing Clotilde into a circle of rank and lustre equal to the highest of her native country. The monarchy of France was long since in the tomb; its nobility were wanderers over the face of the earth. The fortunes, the hopes, the honours, all but the name of her distinguished family, had gone down in the general wreck. But now was given to me the

joyous duty of replacing, by the purest and fondest of all rights, all that the chances of the world had taken away.

I thought her countenance lovelier than ever. It exhibited some slight evidence of the deep and harassing trials which she had so long endured; it was pale, yet the paleness reminded me of the exquisite hue of some of those fine sculptures which the Italian chisel has given for the admiration of mankind. Its expression, too, had assumed a loftier character than even when its first glance struck my young imagination. It had shared something of the elevation of a mind noble by nature, but rendered still loftier and more intellectual by being thrown on its own resources. Yet all this was for society. Her courtly air, inherited from an ancestry of princes; her manners, which retained the piquant animation of her own country, combined with the graver elegance of high life in ours; that incomparable taste in dress, which seems the inheritance of French beauty; and the sparkling happiness of language, scarcely less the gift of her native soil, made her conspicuous from the first moment of her introduction to the circle of the Castle.

But it was in our quiet and lonely hours that I saw the still more captivating aspects of her nature; when neither the splendid Countess de Tourville, nor the woman of brilliant conversation was before me, but an innocent and loving girl—no Armida, no dazzling mistress of the spells which intoxicate the heart by first bewildering the mind; but a sweet and guileless creature in the first bloom of being, full of

nature, full of simplicity, full of truth. How often, in those days of calm delight, have I seen her fine eyes suddenly fill with tears of thankful joy, her cheek glow with fond gratitude, her heart labour with the unutterable language of secure and sacred love!

What hours can be placed in comparison with such hours of wedded confidence! It was then, that I first became acquainted with the nature of the female heart. I then first knew the treasures which the spirit of woman may contain—the hope against hope, the generous faith, the unfailing constancy, the deep affection. How often, when glancing round our superb apartments, crowded with all the glittering and costly equipment of almost royal life, she would clasp my hand, and touchingly contrast them with the solitude of her cell, or the anxieties of that life of trial “from which I alone had rescued her!” How often, when we sat together, uninterrupted by the world, at our sumptuous table; would she, half sportively and half in melancholy, contrast it with the life of flight and fear which she had so lately led, with the rude repast snatched in forests and swamps, in the midst of civil war, with desolation round her and despair in prospect, imprisoned, in the power of a tyrant, and, at every step, approaching nearer to the place of a cruel death! Then a look would thank me more than all the eloquence in the world. Then I saw her eyes brighten, and her cheek bloom with new lustre and beauty unknown before, until I could have almost fallen at her feet and worshipped. I felt the whole supremacy of woman, with the whole homage of the heart of man.

A change in the British cabinet, by the death of one of its leading members, now produced a change in the viceroyalty; and the charge of the government, during the interregnum, necessarily devolved on the secretary. I never felt business more irksome than at this juncture, and I had, more than once, grave thoughts of casting aside the staff of office in spite of all its gilding, withdrawing from the disturbances of public life, and, with Clotilde at my side, finding some quiet corner of England, or the earth, where we might sit under our own vine and our own fig-tree, and forget revolutions and court-days for the rest of our lives.

But against this my young and lovely partner protested, with all the spirit of her ancestry; declaring that, though nothing would give her more unfeigned delight than to quit courts and cities, and fashion and *fêtes*, for ever, if I quitted them along with her—she could not endure the thought of my allowing “the talents which nature had given to me, and the opportunities which had been so liberally offered by fortune,” to perish useless to the world. I had no answer to offer but that I had made her the arbitress of my fate, and she was welcome to do with me as was her sovereign will.

Accordingly I left her, looking like Hebe in her bower, to plunge into a chaos of undecipherable papers, to be deafened with a thousand impossible applications, to marshal lazy departments, to reform antiquated abuses, and, after spending twelve hours a-day in the dust and gloom of official duty, to spend nearly as many hours of the night battling with

arrogant and angry faction in the House of Commons.

But this toil, like most other toils, had its fruits; it gave me an extraordinary increase of public influence, and that influence produced, in the natural course of such things, an extraordinary crop of adherents. If I could have drunk adulation, no man was in more imminent hazard of mystifying his own brains. I began to be spoken of as one equal to the highest affairs of the state, and to whom the viceroyalty itself lay naturally open. But I still longed for a return to England. Delighted as I was with the grace of the higher ranks, amused with the perpetual whim and eccentricity of the lower, and feeling that general attachment to Ireland which every man not disqualified by loss of character must feel, my proper position was in that country where my connexions, my companionships, and my habits, had been formed. A new viceroy was announced; and I solicited my recall. But I had still one remarkable duty to undergo.

The northern insurrection had sunk, and sunk with a rapidity still more unexpected than the suddenness of its rise. The capture of its leader was a blow at the heart, and it lost all power at the instant. In the Castle all was self-congratulation, and the officials talked of the revolt with as much scorn as if there existed no elements of discord in the land. But I was not quite so easily inclined to regard all things through the skirts of the rainbow which had succeeded the storm; however unwilling to check the national exultation among a people who are as

fond of painting the world *couleur de rose* as the French ; laugh as much, and enjoy their laugh much more—my communications with England constantly warned ministers of the hazard of new insurrections, on a broader, deeper, and more desolating scale.

Even my brief tour of the island had shown me, that there were materials of wilder inflammability in the bosom of the south than in the north. The northern revolt was like the burning of a house—the whole was before the eye, the danger might be measured at a glance, the means of extinction might operate upon it in their full power, and when the materials of the house were in ashes, the conflagration died. But the southern insurrection was the burning of a coal-mine—a fire ravaging where human skill could scarcely gain access, kindled among stores of combustion scarcely to be calculated by human experience, growing fiercer the deeper it descended, and, at every new burst, undermining the land, and threatening to carry down into its gulfs all that was stately or venerable on the surface of the soil.

I continued to represent that the north had revolted only on theories of government, metaphysical reveries, pamphleteering abstractions—food too thin to nurture the fierce firmness by which conspiracy is to be carried forward into triumph ; while the south pondered on real or fancied injuries, which wounded the pride of every peasant within its borders.—That the one took up arms for republicanism, the feeblest of all temptations to national resistance ; while the other brooded over a sense of wrong, in visions of revenge for hereditary rights, and the hopes of re-

storing the fallen supremacy of its religion—motives in every age, the most absorbing among the wild impulses of man. I repeatedly warned the Irish cabinet against an outbreak, which, if it succeeded, must convulse the empire; and which, even if it failed, must cost the heaviest sacrifices to the country.

My advice was answered by professions of perfect security, and magnanimous declarations of the wisdom of extinguishing peril by exhibiting the absence of fear! My part was now done, and I was thenceforth to be only a spectator. But the course of things was not to be controlled by the confidence of cabinets. The sun went down, notwithstanding the government conviction that it would shine through the whole twenty-four hours; the political night came, as regularly as the night of nature, and with it came the march of tens of thousands of political lunatics, as brave as lions, though as incapable of discipline. My prediction was formidably fulfilled: the fire-brand and the pike ravaged the land; blood flowed in torrents; and when the country returned to its senses, and the light of common sense once more dawned, ministers and people alike had only the melancholy office of burying the common offences in that great resting-place where the faults of the past generation are marked by tombs, and where the wisdom of the future is to be learned only from inscriptions recording the frailty of all that lived before.

The conspiracy which it had fallen to my lot to extinguish had been brief and local. The half-

Scottish population among whom it broke out, were among the most sharp-witted and well-informed subjects of the empire; and they had no sooner made the discovery, that government was awake, than they felt the folly of attempting to encounter the gigantic strength of the monarchy, and postponed their republican dreams to a "fitter season." The time now approached when the leader of the Northern insurrection was to be brought to trial; and hostile as I was to the effects of his enthusiasm, I took no trivial interest in the individual. Still, to set him at liberty was palpably impossible; and my only resource was, to give him such aid in this extremity of his career as could be given by lightening the severities of his prison, and providing him with the means of securing able counsel. I had now an opportunity of seeing, for the first time, the genius of this singular people displayed under a new and brilliant form—the eloquence of the bar.

In England the Bar holds a high rank; from its essential value to the maintenance of public right in a country, where every possession, property, and principle of man comes continually in the shape of a question of right, and where the true supremacy is in the law. But, in Ireland, the spirit of the nation compensated for the deficiency of power in the law; and the bar was, *par excellence*, the profession of the gentleman. This gave it the highest tone of personal manners. It had another incentive, still more characteristic. The House of Commons was in the closest connexion with the bar. It was scarcely more than a higher bar. All the principal men of

that House had either been educated for the profession, or were actually practising barristers; and as the distinctions of the senate were more dazzling, as well as more rapidly attainable, than those of the law, the strength of the profession was thrown into parliamentary life. The result was, a reflected influence on both; the learning of the bar invigorating the logic of the debates, the eloquence of the debates enriching and elevating the eloquence of the courts of law. At this period the Courts abounded with eloquent men, who would have been distinguished at any tribunal on earth; but, while some might exhibit keener argument, and others more profound learning, the palm of forensic eloquence was universally conceded to one.—Need I pronounce the name of Curran? “Take him for all in all,” he was among the most extraordinary examples of original faculties that I have ever known. All the other leading orators of that proud day of oratory had owed much to study, much to circumstances, and much to the stimulus of great topics, a great cause, and a great theatre for their display.

When Burke spoke, he had the world for his hearer; he stood balancing the fates of empires; his voice reached to the bosom of all the cabinets of civilized nations; and with the office of a prophet, he almost inevitably adopted the majestic language, and seized the awful and magnificent views, of the prophet. This is no depreciation of the powers of that immortal mind; for what can be a higher praise than that, with the largest sphere of duty before him

perhaps ever opened to man, he was found equal to the fulness of his glorious mission?

Sheridan, too, was awakened to a consciousness of his own powers, by the national voice raised against Indian delinquencies. He had there a subject teeming with the loftiest materials of oratory—the sufferings of princes, the mysteries of Oriental superstition, the wild horrors of barbaric tyranny, the fall of thrones, once dazzling the eye and the mind with all the splendours of Oriental empire; himself the chosen pleader for India, in the presence of the assembled rank, dignity, and authority of England. There can be no question of the genius, which showed itself competent to so illustrious a labour. But the materials were boundless; the occasion was a summons to all the energies of the human intellect; never was the draught of human praise, the spell of that enchantress which holds the spirit of men in most undisputed sway, presented to the lip in a more jewelled goblet.

But Curran spoke almost wholly deprived of those resistless stimulants; his topics were comparatively trivial—the guilt of provincial conspiracy, incurred by men chiefly in the humbler ranks of life, and in all instances obscure. No great principles of national right were to live or die upon the success of his pleading; no distressed nation hailed him as its defender; no impregnable barrier against oppression in Europe or Asia was to be inscribed with his name. He was simply an advocate, in the narrow courts of a dependent kingdom—humiliated by the hopeless

effort to rescue a succession of unfortunate beings, whose lives were already in the grasp of justice—compressed on every side by localities of time, habit, and opinion; and thwarted alike by the clamours of prejudice, and the frowns of authority. Yet his speeches at the bar are unequalled, to this hour. His creative powers seemed to rejoice in the very emptiness of the space, which they were to fill with life, lustre, and beauty. Of all the great speakers, his images arose from the simplest conceptions; while they rapidly wrought themselves into magnitude and splendour. They reminded me of the vapours rising from the morning field—thin, vague, and colourless; but suddenly seized by the wind, swelling into volume, and ascending till they caught the sunbeams, and shone with the purple and gold of the summer cloud.

The trial of the unfortunate rebel leader gave him a signal opportunity for the exertion of his extraordinary faculties. It had excited the deepest interest throughout the country. Thousands had flocked from all parts of the land, to be present at a crisis which excited the national feelings in the highest degree; which involved the personal safety of individuals, perhaps of a much superior rank to the accused; and, above all, which seemed to fix the stamp of public justice on the guilt or impunity of opinions, long cherished by the mind of Ireland. As the day of the trial approached, physiognomies were to be seen in the streets, which showed, that individuals were brought together by the event, who had never been in the metropolis before. The stern and hard, but

sagacious countenances of the north were thronging beside the broad, open, and bold features of the south ; and those again contrasted with the long, dark, and expressive visages of the west, which still give such indelible evidence of their Spanish origin. Many of the men who now filled the busy thoroughfares of the capital, had come from the remotest corners of Ireland, as if to stand their own trial.—The prisoner at the bar was their representative ; his cause was their cause ; his judgment the decision of the tribunal on their principles ; his fate only an anticipation of their own.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“ My soul was mantled with dark shadows born
Of lowly fear, disquieted in vain.
Its phantoms hung around the star of morn,
A cloud-like, weeping train.
Through the long day they dimm’d the autumn gold
Of all the glistening leaves, and wildly roll’d,
When the last farewell flush of light was glowing.”

HEMANS.

As I drove towards the noble building where the trial was to take place—one of the stateliest examples of architectural grace and dignity in a city distinguished for the beauty of its public buildings—it was impossible to avoid being struck with the general look of popular restlessness. The precaution of government had called in a large military force to protect the general tranquillity, and the patrols of cavalry and the frequent passing of troops to their posts, created a perpetual movement in the streets. The populace gathered in groups, which, rapidly dissolving at the approach of the soldiery, as rapidly assembled again, when they had passed by ; street minstrels of the most humble description were plying their trade with a remorseless exertion of lungs ; I heard

the names of the Parliamentary leaders and the government frequently transpiring in those rough specimens of the popular taste; and from the alternate roars of fierce laughter and bursts of wild indignation which arose from the groups, it was evident that "men and measures" were not spared. The aspect of the multitude in the vicinity of the Law Courts was still more disturbed.

Rebellion has a physiognomy of its own, and I had by this time learned to read it with tolerable fidelity to its nature. It always struck me, as of a wholly different character from that of the vice or the violence of the people.—It wears a thoughtful air; the lips seem to have a secret enclosed, the eye is lowering, the step unsteady; the man exhibits a consciousness of danger from the glance or tread of every passer-by. His visage is sullen, stern, and meditative; I can scarcely allow this conception to be a work of fancy, for I have never been deceived in my readings of that most expressive of all betrayers of the inner man. On this day, I could have predicted the preparation for some general and reckless rising against government, on the first opportunity when it should be found slumbering on its post: and my prediction would have been true.

The court was crowded, and it was with no small difficulty that I was enabled to reach the seat beside the judge, which had been provided for me. The arraignment and preparatory routine of the trial gave time for the court to subside into order; and the address of the principal law-officer, for the prosecution, though exciting the deepest anxiety, was

listened to in the most respectful silence. The case was strong, and was ably dealt with by the attorney-general. The evidence was clear and complete, and the hope of an acquittal seemed to be gradually abandoned, in the expressive gloom of the spectators. The prisoner at the bar, too, seemed to be more dejected, than I had presumed from his former intrepidity; and the few glances which I could suffer myself to give to a being in his calamitous condition, showed me a frequent writhing of the lip, a clenching of the teeth, and a nervous contraction of the features, which looked like despair.

At length, the counsel for the defence rose. It was the first instance of my seeing the memorable Curran engaged in his profession. I had met him from time to time in general society, and felt the delight which all experienced in his unfailing pleasantry. I had hitherto enjoyed him as the wit; I was now to be delighted and overwhelmed by him as the orator.

Curran was the last man to be judged of by appearances. Nature had been singularly unkind to his exterior; as if the more to astonish us by the powers of the man within. His figure was undersized, his visage brown, hard, and peasantlike, his gesture was a gesticulation, and his voice was alternately feeble and shrill.—His whole effect was to be derived from means, with which that little meagre frame and sharp treble had nothing to do. But he had a singularly vivid eye. It was of the deepest black, and such was the intensity of its expression, in his more impassioned moments, that it was scarcely an exaggeration to say, that it shot fire. Still, a stranger would have regarded

him chiefly as an humourist, from the glances of sly sarcasm, and even of open ridicule, which he cast round the court during the pleadings of some of his "learned brethren." But, in that court his true powers were known; and the moment of his rising, careless as was his attitude, and listless the look which he gave, as he turned from his brief to the jury; was the signal for universal silence, and the fixing of every eye upon the great pleader.

He began, by sweeping away the heap of useless facts and forensic prolixities, with which his predecessors had encumbered the case; and nothing could be more admirable than the dexterity, with which he seized on the most casual circumstances tending to clear the character of the accused. But it was when he arrived at higher topics, that he displayed his genius.

"Nunc in ovilia, mox in reluctantes dracones." It was when, from developing the ignorance and contradictions of the informer by whom the charge of conspiracy was sustained, he rushed to the attack on the general system of the Irish government; that I saw him in his full vigour. He denounced it, as the source of all the tumults which had of late years shaken the "isle from its propriety." "Here was the fount," said he, "from which flowed the waters of bitterness; not the less bitter, that I can trace its wanderings through centuries of national desolation, through fields of blood, and beside the graves of generations."

After giving the most daring outline, of what he termed "the evils of the local sovereignty of Ireland," he surprised me into sudden acquiescence and involuntary admiration, by a panegyric on the principles

of British government in the more favoured island —“the majestic supremacy of the law, extending over all things, sustaining all things, administering life and health and purity to all ; a moral atmosphere, though, like the physical, invisible, yet, like it, irresistible in its strength, penetrating the whole national existence, and carrying on, undisturbed and perpetual, in the day and night of empire, all the great processes of national animation and prosperity.” Then, suddenly darting away from this abstracted and solemn view, he indulged in some wild story of native humour, which convulsed the whole audience with laughter. Yet, before the burst had subsided, he touched another string of that harp which so magically responded to the master’s hand. He described the long career of calamity, through which an individual, born with a glowing heart, brilliant faculties, and an aspiring spirit, must struggle, in a country filled with the pride of independence, and yet, for ages, languishing in the condition of a province. Some share of his pathos in this sketch was perhaps borrowed from his own early difficulties ; and I heard, poured out with the touching vehemence of bitter reality, probably the very meditations, which had preyed upon the heart of the student in his chamber, or darkened his melancholy walks in the cloisters of the Temple.

But, he suddenly started into a new course of thought, and reprobated with the loftiest rebuke, that state of the law which, while it required two witnesses for the proof of treason in England, was content with one in Ireland. This he branded with indignant

vituperation, adopted, according to his habit, from the most familiar conceptions; yet, by their familiarity, striking the mind with astonishing force. He called it “playing at pushpin with the lives of men”—“the reading-made-easy of judicial murder”—“the ‘rule-of-three’ of forensic assassination; given, a villain, multiplied by a false oath; the product an execution!”

He now revelled in the boldest extravagances of imagery and language, using expressions, which, written, might resemble the burlesque of a public jester, or the wildness of a disturbed mind, but which were followed by the audience, whom he had heated up to the point of passion, with all but acclamation. Still he revelled on: his contrasts and comparisons continuing to roll out upon each other; some noble, some grotesque, but all effective. After one dazzling excursion into the native history, in which he contrasted the aboriginal hospitality and rude magnificence of the old Irish chieftain, the Tir-Owen or O’Nial, with the chilling halls of the modern absentee; he suddenly changed his tone, and wandered away into a round of fantastic, and almost frolicsome pleasantries, which shook even the gravity of the bench. Then, suddenly checking himself, and drawing his hand across his brow to wipe away a tear—for even the hard-headed lawyer was not always on his guard against the feeling of the moment—he upbraided himself, and the bystanders, for the weakness of being attracted by any lighter conception; while the sufferings of Ireland were demanding all their sympathies.

And even this he did in his characteristic manner. “Alas!” said he, in a voice which seemed sinking

with a sense of misfortune, “why do *I* jest? and why do *you* smile? Or, are we for ever to be the victims of our national propensity; and led away by trivialities? We tickle ourselves with straws, when we should be arming for the great contests of national minds. We are ready to be amused with the twang of the Jew’s harp, when we should be yearning for the blast of the trumpet.—You remind me, and I remind myself, of the scene at one of our country-wakes. It is the true portrait of our fruitless mixture of levity and sorrow. We come to mourn, and we yield to merriment at the first jest. We sit under the roof of death, yet we are as ready to laugh as ever—the corpse of Ireland is before our eyes: we fling a few flowers over its shroud, and then, ‘we eat, drink, and are merry.’ Must it for ever be pronounced, that we are a frivolous and a fickle race—that the Irishman remains a voluntary beggar, with all the bounties of nature round him; unknown to fame, with genius flashing from his eyes; humiliated, with all the armoury of law and liberty open to his hands; and laughing, laughing on, when the only echo is from the chambers of the grave?”

The orator dropped his head on his clasped hands, as he spoke the last words; and there was an universal silence, for a while. It was interrupted by a groan of agony from the prisoner. All eyes were instantly turned to the dock, and the spectacle there was startling. He seemed writhing under intolerable torture. His hands clung eagerly to the front of the dock, as if to sustain him; his lips were colourless, but his features and forehead were of the most

feverish suffusion. At first the general impression was, that he had been overcome by a sense of his perilous condition; but it was soon evident, that his pangs were more physical than moral. Curran flung his brief upon the table, and hurried over to his unhappy client's side. A few words passed between them, inaudible to the court; but they had the unexpected effect, of apparently restoring the sufferer to complete tranquillity. He again stood erect; his brow, and it was a bold one, resumed its marble smoothness; his features grew calm, and his whole aspect returned to the stern and moveless melancholy of an antique statue.

The advocate now, as if with renewed sympathy, commenced a singularly powerful attempt to avert the sentence, by an appeal to the national feelings. "If," said he, "the prisoner had been charged with any of those crimes which effect their object by individual injury, I should disdain to offer a defence, which could be accomplished only by confounding the principles of right and wrong. But here is an instance, in which the noblest mind might err, in which the highest sagacity might be perplexed, in which the most self-denying virtue might discover nothing but a voluntary sacrifice." The problem before his client was "the proudest that had ever occupied the mind, in ancient or modern times. It was, by what means a patriot might raise his country to the highest possible elevation. But, what are the essentials for such a purpose? Intrepidity, independence of soul, the steadiest perseverance, the manliest fortitude; all the great qualities of head and heart. Those are the tri-

butes, which the patriot must bring to the altar of his country. But, if the priest, at that altar, must be prepared to be himself the sacrifice; is it the hand of his countrymen that is to strike the knife into the victim?"

A sense of this hazardous line of observation, however, soon struck the pleader; and he admitted in all its fulness the necessity of "respecting public tranquillity, of relinquishing doubtful projects of good, and of studying the prosperity of a nation," rather through the "microscope of experience," than by "vague, though splendid, telescopic glances" at times and things beyond our power. "The man," said he, "who discovers the cause of blight in an ear of corn, is a greater benefactor to the world than the man who discovers a fixed star." From the glow on his countenance, and the sudden brightness of his eye, I could see, that he was about to throw himself loose on some new current of rich and rapid illustration; when he was suddenly stopped by a shriek from the dock. The prisoner had fallen, with his head over its front, and seemed gasping in the last pangs. The drops of torture stood thick on his brow, his eye was glazed, and his lips continued to quiver, without the power of utterance. The advocate approached him; the dying man caught him by the hand; and, as if the touch had restored his faculties at the instant, said, with a faint smile, and in a low tone, yet so clear as to be audible to the whole assembly, in the words of Pierre—"We have deceived the senate!" In the utterance, he fell back and died. To escape the ignominy of the scaffold, the unhappy

man, before he came into court, had swallowed poison !

I speak of Curran, as I see him through the lapse of years. Yet, time has had no other effect on my recollection, than to raise my estimate of his genius. I fully admit, that in judging of an extraordinary man, time may unduly exalt the image, as well as confuse the likeness; the haze of years may magnify all the nobler outlines, while it conceals all that would enfeeble their dignity.

There is to me no question, that his style might form a hazardous model for inferior ability, and that he urged it to that dangerous verge, beyond which all must be descent. Still, after seeing many a bold, and even brilliant, attempt to share the honours of Curran as a forensic speaker; I have seen none entitled to eclipse his original fame. To read his speeches at the bar, is to lose their chief effect; the form remains, but the living principle is gone.—It is the study of the human figure, among the cases of a museum.

But the *contrasts* of his style were his alone. To me, his eloquence now resembles those midsummer-night dreams, in which all is contrast, and all is magical.—Shapes, diminutive and grotesque for a moment, and then suddenly expanding into majesty and beauty; topics the most trifling and hopeless; converted, at a touch, into superb and solemn themes; like deserts, in the dream;—changed, at a glance, into all the luxury of landscape. The power of his creations still haunts me; Aladdin's palace, starting from the sands, was not more sudden,

fantastic, or glittering. Where all seemed barren, and where a thousand other minds would have traversed the waste a thousand times, and left it as wild and unpeopled as ever; no sooner had he spoken the spell, than up sprang the fabric of fancy, the field was bright with living character, and the air was filled with visions.

On returning to London, I found the world in the "transition state." The spirit of the people was changed; the nature of the war was changed; the principle of the great parties in the legislature was changed. A new era of the contest had arrived; and, in the midst of general perplexity as to the nature of the approaching events, every one exhibited a conviction, that when they came, their magnitude would turn all the struggles of the past into child's play.

I, too, had my share in the change. I had now passed my public noviciate, and had obtained my experience of statesmanship, on a scale, if too small for history, yet sufficiently large to teach me the working of the machinery. National conspiracy, the council-chamber, popular ebullition, and the tardy but powerful action of public justice, had been my tutors; and I was now felt, by the higher powers, to be not unfit for trust in a larger field. My exertions in the Legislature soon enabled me to give satisfactory evidence, that I had not altogether overlooked the character of the crisis; and, after some interviews with the premier, his approval of my

conduct in Ireland was followed by the proposal of office, with a seat in the cabinet.

I had thus attained, in the vigour of life, a distinction for which hundreds, perhaps thousands, had laboured through life, in vain. But mine was no couch of silken prosperity. The period was threatening. The old days of official repose were past, never to return. The state of Europe was hourly assuming an aspect of the deepest peril. The war had hitherto been but the struggle of armies ; it now threatened to be the struggle of nations. It had hitherto lived on the natural resources of public expenditure ; it now began to prey upon the vitals of kingdoms. The ordinary finance of England was to be succeeded by imposts pressing heavily on the existing generation, and laying a hereditary burden on all that were to follow. The nature of our struggle deepened the difficulty. All the common casualties of nations were so far from breaking the enemy down, that they only gave him renewed power.—Defeat swelled his ranks ; confiscation enriched his coffers ; bankruptcy gave him strength ; faction invigorated his government ; and insubordination made him invincible. In the midst of this confusion, even a new terror arose.

The democracy of France, after startling Europe, had seemed to be sinking into feebleness and apathy ; when a new wonder appeared in the political hemisphere, too glaring and too ominous, to suffer our eyes to turn from it for a moment.—The Consulate assumed the rule of France. Combining the fiery

rashness of republicanism with the perseverance of monarchy, it now carried the whole force of the country into foreign fields. Every foreign capital began to tremble. The whole European system shook, before a power which smote it with the force of a cannon-ball against a crumbling bastion. The extraordinary man who now took the lead in France, had touched the string which vibrated in the heart of every native of the soil.—He had found them weary of the crimes of the democracy; he told them that a career of universal supremacy was open before them. He had found them degraded by the consciousness of riot and regicide; he told them that they were the chevaliers of the new age, and destined to eclipse the chevaliers of all the ages past. His Italian campaigns, by their rapidity, their fine combinations, and their astonishing success, had created a new art of war. He had brought them romantic triumphs from the land of romance.

Day by day the populace of the capital had been summoned to see pageants of Italian standards, cannon, and prisoners. Every courier that galloped through the streets had brought tidings of some new conquest; and every meeting of the Councils was employed in announcing the addition of some classic province, the overthrow of some hostile diadem, or the arrival of some convoy of those most magnificent of all the spoils of war, the treasures of the Italian arts. France began to dream of the conquest of the world.

The contrast between her past calamities and her present splendour, powerfully heightened the illusion. France loves illusion; she has always rejoiced in

glittering deceptions, even with the perfect knowledge that they were deceptions ; and here stood the most dazzling of political charlatans, the great wonder-worker, raising phantoms of national glory, even out of the charnel. The wrecks of faction, the remnants of the monarchy, and the corpses lying headless in the shadow of the guillotine, gave full semblance to the conception—The Republic *was* a charnel. But, her people, by nature in extremes, wild and fierce, yet gallant and generous, had become at length conscious of the national fall in the eyes of Europe. They were utterly scandalized by the rudeness, the baseness, and the brutishness, of rabble supremacy. They gazed upon their own crimsoned hands and tarnished weapons, with intolerable disgust ; and it was in this moment of depression, that they saw a sudden beam of military renown blaze across the national darkness.

After a lassitude, so long, that it had extinguished all but the memory of her old triumphs, France was a conqueror ; after an age of helpless exhaustion, she had risen into almost supernatural vigour ; after a hundred years, scarcely marked by a single victory, her capital rang with the daily sound of successful battles against the veterans of Frederick and Maria Theresa ; after lingering, for generations, in the obscurity so bitter to the popular heart, France had been suddenly raised into the broadest lustre of European sovereignty.—The world *was* changed ; and the limits of that change offered only a more resistless lure to the popular passion, for their being still indistinct to the keenest eye of man.

But our chief struggle was at home, and the reaction of our foreign disasters came with terrible weight upon a cabinet already tottering. We saw our fate. Days and nights of the most anxious consultation, could not relieve us from the hourly increasing evidence, that the Continent was on the verge of ruin. The voice of Opposition, reinforced by the roar of the multitude, could no longer be shut out by the curtains of the council-chamber. Fox, always formidable, was never more confident and more popular, than when he made the House ring with prophecies of national downfall. His attacks were now incessant. He flung his hand-grenades night after night into our camp, and constantly with still greater damage.

We still fought, but it was the fight of despair. Pitt was imperturbable; but there was not one among his colleagues, who did not feel the hopelessness of calling for public reliance, when, in every successive debate, we heard the leader of Opposition contemptuously asking,—what answer we had to the Gazette crowded with bankruptcy? to the resolutions of great bodies of the people denouncing the war? or to the deadly evidence of its effects in the bulletin which he held in his hand, announcing some new defeat of our allies, some new treaty of submission, some new barter of provinces for the precarious existence of foreign thrones?

In all my recollections of public life, this was the period of the deepest perplexity. The name of the great minister has been humiliated, by those who judge of the past only by the present. But then

all was new. The general eye of statesmanship had been deceived by the formal grandeur of the continental sovereignties. They had lain untouched, like the bodies of their buried kings, with all their armour on, and with every feature unchanged; and such they might have remained, for ages to come, had not a new force broken open their gilded and sculptured tombs, torn off their cerements, and exposed them to the light and air. Then, a touch extinguished them; the armour dropped into dust; the royal robes dissolved; the royal features disappeared; and the whole illusion left nothing but its moral behind.

It can be no dishonour to the memory of the first of statesmen, to acknowledge that he had not the gift of miracle. Europe had never before seen a war of the people. The burning passions, rude vigour, and remorseless daring of the multitude, were phenomena of which man then knew no more, than he knows of the materials of destruction which lie hid in the central caverns of the globe, and which some new era may be suffered to develope, for the new havoc of posterity.

Even to this hour, I think, that the true source of revolutionary triumph has been mistaken—it was not in the furious energy of its factions, nor in the wild revenge of the people, nor even in the dazzling views of national conquest. Those were but gusts of the popular tempest, currents of the great popular tide. But the mighty mover of all was, the sudden change from the disgusts and depressions of serfdom, into a sense, that all the world of possession lay before the bold heart and the ruthless hand. By the

Republic, every form of wealth and enjoyment was offered to men, who had begun life in the condition of beings chained to the ground, and who could never have hoped to change their toil, but for the grave. But the barrier was now cast down, and all were free to rush in. The treasury of national honours was suddenly flung open, and all might share the spoil. This was the true secret of the astonishing power of the Revolution.—The man who was nothing to-day, might be every thing to-morrow. The serf might be a statesman. The conscript might be a captain, a colonel, a general; before the Austrian or Prussian soldier could be a corporal. Who can wonder at the march of France, or the flight of her enemies?

CHAPTER XL.

“ To horse, to horse ; the standard flies,
The bugles sound the call.
The Gallic navy stems the seas,
The voice of battle’s on the breeze;
Arouse ye, one and all !

“ If ever breath of British gale
Shall fan the tricolor,
Or footstep of invader rude,
With rapine foul, and red with blood
Pollute our happy shore,—

“ Then farewell, home, and farewell, friends,
Adieu each tender tie,
Resolved, we mingle in the tide,
Where furious squadrons charging ride,
To conquer or to die.”

SIR W. SCOTT.

ALTHOUGH every night now produced a debate, and the demand on the activity and vigilance of ministers was incessant and overwhelming; the great debates in both Houses were few, in comparison with those of later times. In those pitched battles of the parties, their whole strength was mustered from every quarter; the question was long announced; and its decision was regarded as giving the most complete

measure of the strength of the Cabinet and Opposition. One of those nights came, unfortunately for ministers, on the very day in which the bulletin arrived, announcing the signature of the first Austrian armistice. The passage of the Tyrol had stripped Austria of its mountain barrier. Terror had done the rest; and the armistice was signed within three marches of Vienna! The courier who had been sent to the Austrian ambassador, and had been permitted to pass through France, reported the whole nation to be in a frenzy of triumph. He had every where seen civic processions, military displays, and illuminations of the cities. The native pride of the people had risen to the utmost height of national enthusiasm; and Europe was pronounced, by every Frenchman, from the Directory to the postilion, to be at their feet.

This intelligence was all but fatal. If a shower of cannon-balls had been discharged upon the ministerial benches, it could scarcely have produced a more sweeping effect. It was clear, that the sagacity of the "independent members"—only another name for the most flexible portion of the House—was fully awake to the contingency; the "waiters upon Providence," as they were called, with no very reverent allusion, were evidently on the point of deciding for themselves; the "King's friends"—a party unknown to the constitution—began to move away by whole sections; and, crowded as the clubs were during the day, I never saw the minister rise with so few of his customary troops behind him. But the Opposition benches were filled to repletion; and

their leader sat looking round him, with good-humoured astonishment, and sometimes with equally good-humoured burlesque, on the sudden increase of his auxiliaries.

The motion was in answer to a royal message on the continental subsidies. Nothing could have been more difficult than the topic at that juncture. Yet, I never listened to Pitt with more genuine admiration. Fox, in his declamatory bursts, was superior to every speaker whom I have ever heard. His appearance of feeling was irresistible. It seemed that, if one could have stripped his heart, it could scarcely have shown its pulsations more vividly to the eye, than they transpired from his fluent and most eloquent tongue. But, if Fox was the most powerful of declaimers, Pitt was the mightiest master of the language of national council. He, too, could be occasionally glowing and imaginative. He could even launch the lighter weapons of sarcasm with singular dexterity; but his true rank was, as the ruler of Empire, and his true talent was never developed, but when he spoke for the interests of Empire.

On this night, he was more earnest and more impressive than ever; the true description would have been, more *imperial*. He spoke, less like a debater, than like one who held the sceptre in his hand; and one who also felt, that he was transmitting his wisdom as a parting legacy to a great people.

A portion of that speech, which ought never to be forgotten by the leaders of public affairs in England, as the champions of British freedom, was singularly vivid and powerful. Referring to the calumniated Re-

volution of 1688—"We now stand," said he, "almost in the same position with respect to France and Europe, in which the government of William III. stood a century ago. We have only to substitute the democracy of France for the monarchy; and Europe enfeebled by the shocks of war, and still more enfeebled by perfidy; for Europe untouched and intrepid, awake to the ambition of the French king, and determined to meet him sword in hand. But the king of England was even then the guiding mind of Europe. I now demand, what was the redeeming policy of that pre-eminent sovereign? It was, never to despair of the triumph of principle; never to doubt of the ultimate fortunes of good in a contest with evil; and never to hesitate in calling upon a great and free people for the defence of that constitution which had made them great and free."

Those high-toned sentiments were received with loud cheers. Even Opposition felt the natural force of the appeal, and the cheering was universal; party was forgotten for the time, and the name of England, and the revived glory of those illustrious days, bowed the whole House to the will of the great orator. In the midst of their enthusiasm, he took from the table a volume of the records, and read the final address of William to his Parliament; the bequest of a dying king to the people whom he had rescued from slavery. This royal speech had evidently formed his manual of government, and certainly, a nobler declaration never came from the throne.

"My Lords and Gentlemen—I promise myself

that you are met together with that just sense of the common danger of Europe, and that resentment of the late proceedings of the French king, which have been so fully and universally expressed in the loyal and seasonable addresses of my people." In allusion to the French plan of universal monarchy in the reign of Louis XIV., the speech pronounced that the alliance of Spain was the commencement of a system for subjugating Europe. "It is fit," said the King, "that I should tell you that the eyes of all Europe are upon this Parliament—all matters are at a stand until your resolutions are known; and therefore no time ought to be lost.

"You have yet an opportunity, by God's blessing, to secure to yourselves and your posterity the quiet enjoyment of your religion and liberties, if you are not *wanting to yourselves*, but will exert the utmost vigour of the English nation. But I tell you plainly, that if you do not lay hold of this occasion, you have no reason to hope for another." One of the measures proposed was, for the maintenance of the public good faith. "I cannot but press upon you," said the king, "to take care of the public credit, which cannot be preserved but by keeping sacred the maxim, that *they shall never be losers* who trust to parliamentary security.

"Let me conjure you to disappoint the only hopes of your enemies by your unanimity. I have shown, and will always show, how desirous I am to be the common father of all my people: do you, in like manner, lay aside parties and divisions; let there be no

other distinction heard of amongst us, but of those who are for the Protestant religion and the present establishment; and of those who mean a Popish prince and a French government.

“I shall only add this; that if you do, in good earnest, desire to see England hold the balance of Europe, and to be indeed at the head of the Protestant interest, it will appear by the present opportunity.”

Daylight shone on the windows of St. Stephen's before the debate closed. The minister had retired immediately after his exhausting speech, and left his friends to sustain the combat. It was long and fierce; but Opposition was again baffled, and the division gave us a lingering majority. It was now too late, or too early, to go to rest; and I had returned to my official apartments, to look over some returns required for the next council, when my friend the secretary opened my door. His countenance looked care-worn; and for a few moments after he had sat down, he remained in total silence.

This was so unlike the cheerful spirit of former times—times in which he had seemed to defy, or almost to enjoy, the struggles of public life—that I began to express alarm for his health. But he interrupted me by a look of the deepest distress, and the words “Pitt is dying.” No words could be fuller of ill omen, and my anxiety was equal to his own. “My meaning,” said he, “is not, that he must die to-day, or to-morrow, nor in six months, nor perhaps in a year, but that the statesman is

dead. He must speak no more, act no more, and even think no more, or he must go to his grave. This night has finished the long supremacy of the noblest mind that ever ruled the councils of this country. William Pitt may live, but the minister has finished his days."

"Yet," I remarked, "I never heard him more animated or more impressive than on this night. He absolutely broke down all resistance. His mind seemed richer than ever, and his combination of facts and reasoning appeared to me unequalled by even his greatest previous efforts. I should have almost pronounced him to be inspired by the increased difficulties of the time."

"True—yet I conveyed him from the House, fainting;—I have sat, along with his physician, at his bedside ever since, applying restoratives to him, with scarcely a hope of recovery. It is plain that another night of such effort would be too much for his frame; and the question on which I have now come to summon an immediate meeting of our friends, turns on the means of calming public opinion until he shall be able to appear in his place once more. His career is unquestionably at an end, but his name is powerful still; and though another trial of his powers in Parliament would cost him his life, still, as the head of the cabinet, he might effect, for awhile, all the principal purposes of an administration."

I doubted the "possibility of encountering the present strength of Opposition," reinforced, as it was, by calamity abroad, and asked, "Whether any expe-

dient was contemplated, to restore the public fortunes on the Continent?"

"Every point of that kind has been long since considered," was the answer. "Our alliances have all failed; and we are now reproached, not simply with the folly of paying for inefficient help, but with the cruelty of dragging the states of Europe into a contest, where to be crushed was inevitable."

I still urged an enquiry into the strength of states which had never been sharers in the war. "If the minor German powers have been absorbed; if Prussia has abandoned the cause; if Austria has fought in vain; is the *world* included in Germany?" I threw the map of Europe on the table. "See what a narrow circle comprehends the whole space, to which we have hitherto limited the defence of society against the enemy of all social order.—Our cause is broader than Austria and Prussia; it is broader than Europe; it is the cause of civilization itself; and why not summon all civilization to its defence? Russia alone has an army of half a million, yet she has never fired a shot." Still, I found it difficult to convince my fellow minister.

"Russia—jealous, ambitious, and Asiatic; Russia, with the Eastern world for her natural field—what object can she have in relieving the broken powers of the Continent? Must she not rather rejoice in the defeats and convulsions which leave them at her mercy?" I still continued to urge him.

"Rely upon it; it is to the North that we must look for the reinforcement. If the councils of Catha-

rine were crafty, the councils of her successor may be sincere. Catharine thought only of the seizure of Turkey; Paul may think only of the profits of commerce. Yet, is it altogether justifiable to suppose that monarchs may not feel the same sympathies, the same principles of honour—nay, the same abhorrence of a sanguinary republicanism—which a private individual might feel in any other instance of oppression?”

“Still, Marston, I am at a loss to know, by what influence a British government could urge a Russian throne into a contest, a thousand miles from its frontier; in which it can gain no accession of territory, and but little accession of military fame; and all this, while it is itself perfectly secure from all aggression.”

“All true; but remember the striking commencement of Voltaire’s *Memoir of Peter*—‘Who could have pretended to say, in the year 1700, that a magnificent and polished court would be formed at the extremity of the Gulf of Finland; that the inhabitants of Cazan and the banks of the Wolga would be ranked among disciplined warriors, and, after beating the Turk and the Swede, gain victories in Germany? That a desert of two thousand leagues in length, should, in the space of fifty years, extend its influence to all the European courts; and that, in 1759, the most zealous patron of literature in Europe should be a Russian sovereign? The man who had said this, would have been regarded as the most chimerical mortal on earth.’

“Yet,” said I, “all this has been done, and the career is not closed. More may be done still. It may even be our most essential policy, to bring Russia into full collision with France. She is now the only rival : and I shall scarcely regret the fall of the German sovereignties ; if it clears the field, to bring face to face the two great powers which hold at their sword’s point the fate of the Continent.”

A month passed, of perpetual difficulty in the cabinet, of ill news from abroad, and of violent discontents among the people. A deficient harvest had come, to increase the national murmurs ; a season of peculiar inclemency had added its share to the public vexations ; and I fully experienced the insufficiency of office, and of the showy honours of courts, to constitute happiness. But a new scene was reserved for me. Casual as had been my conversation with the secretary of state, it was not forgotten : it had been related to the minister ; and it so far coincided with the conceptions of a mind, which seemed to comprehend every chance of human things, that I was shortly sent for, to enter into the necessary explanations. The result was, the offer of a mission to St. Petersburg. The proposal was so unexpected, that I required time for my answer.—I must abandon high employment at home, for a temporary distinction abroad ; my knowledge of Russia was slight ; the character of the Czar was eccentric ; and the success of an embassy, dependent on the most capricious of mankind, was obviously so uncertain ; that the result might strip me of whatever credit I already possessed.

But, there was one authority, to which I always appealed. I placed the proposal in the hands of Clotilde ; and she settled all my doubts at once, by declaring “that it was the appointment which, if she had been suffered to choose, she would have selected, in preference to all others, for its honour and its services.” I had no power to resist such pleadings—seconded as they were by the rosiest smiles, and the most beaming eyes. But Clotilde was still the woman, and I only valued her the more for it ; her sincerity had not a thought to hide ; and she acknowledged her delight, at the prospect of once more treading the soil of the Continent ; at gazing even on the borders of her native land, excluded as she might be from its entrance ; at the enjoyment of continental life in the brilliant animation of its greatest court ; and at mingling with the scene, in a rank which entitled her to its first distinctions.

“But, Clotilde, how will you reconcile your tastes to the wild habits of Russia, and even to the solemn formalities of a northern court?”

“They both present themselves to me, with the charm at once of novelty and recollection. From my nursery days, the names of Peter, Catharine, and their marvellous city, rang in the ears of all Paris. Romance had taken refuge at the pole ; Voltaire, Buffon, D’Alembert—all the wit, and all the philosophy of France—satirized the French court under the disguise of Russian panegyric ; and St. Petersburg was to us the modern Babylon—a something compounded of the wildness

of a Scythian desert, and the lustre of a Turkish tale."

The ministerial note had been headed "most secret and confidential," and as such I had regarded it. But I soon saw the difficulty of keeping a "state secret." I had scarcely sent in my acceptance of the appointment, when I found a letter on my table from my old Israelite friend, Mordecai, congratulating me on "my decision." It was in his usual abrupt style—

"I was aware of the minister's offer to you, within twelve hours after it was made. I should have written at once, urging its acceptance; but I preferred leaving your own judgment to settle the question. Still, I can give you some personal knowledge on the subject of Russia. I have been there during the last six months. My daughter—for what purpose I have never been able to ascertain—took a sudden whim of hating Switzerland, and loving the snows and deserts of the North. But I have known the sex too long, ever to think of combating their wills by argument.—The only chance of success is to give way to them. Mariamne, sick of hills and valleys, and unable to breathe in the purest air of the globe, determined to try the exhalations from the marshes of the Neva. But, she is my child, after all—the only being for whom I live—and I was peculiarly grateful, that she had not fixed on Siberia, or taken a resolution to live and die at Pekin.—I do not regret my journey. It has thrown a new light on me. I must acknowledge to you, that I was astonished at Russia. I had

known it in early life, and thought that I knew it well. But it is singularly changed. The spirit of the people—the country—the throne itself—have undergone the most remarkable of silent revolutions, and the most effective of all.—Russia is now Russia no longer; she is Greece, Germany, France; and she will yet be England. Her politics and her faculties, alike, embrace the civilized world. She is Greece in her subtlety, Germany in her intelligence, and France in her ambition. St. Petersburg is less the capital of her empire, though of all capitals the most magnificent, than an emblem of her mind. I have often stood on the banks of the Neva, and, looking round me on their mass of palaces, involuntarily asked myself—Could all this have been the work of a single mind? Other capitals have been the work of necessity, of chance, of national defence, of the mere happiness of location. But, this was founded in ambition alone; founded by the sovereign will of one who felt, that in it he was erecting an empire of conquest; and that from this spot, in after-ages, was to pour forth the force, that was to absorb every other dominion of the world. Peter fixed on the site of his city, to tell this to the world. I see in its framer, and in its site, the living words—‘I fix my future capital in a wilderness—in a swamp—in a region of tempests—on the shores of an inhospitable sea—in a climate of nine-months’ winter—to show that I am able to conquer all the obstacles of nature. I might have fixed it on the shores of the Euxine—in the most fertile regions of Asia—in the superb

plains of central Russia—or on the banks of the Danube ; but I preferred fixing it in the extremity of the North, to show, that the mind and power of Russia dreaded no impediments, of either man or nature.’

“ I am now in London for a week. Come ; and you will find me in my den.”

I visited him “ in his den ;” and it deserved the name as much as ever. Not a pane had been cleared of its dinginess ; not a cobweb had been swept from its ceiling ; nothing had been removed, except the pair of living skeletons who once acted as his attendants. They had been removed by the Remover of all things ; and were succeeded by a pair, so similar in meagreness and oddity of appearance, that I could not have known the change, except for its mention by their master, congratulating himself on being so “ fortunate” in finding substitutes. I found Mordecai immersed in day-books and ledgers, and calculating the exchanges with as much anxiety as if he were not worth a shilling. But his look was more languid than before, and his powerful eye seemed to have sunk deeper beneath his brow.

“ You are probably surprised at seeing me here,” said he ; “ but I have more reason than ever to be here. There is a time for all things, but not if we throw it away. My last journey through Poland has revived my zeal in behalf of my nation ; and, as years advance on me, like the rest of the world ; I find that I must only exert myself the more.”

“ But, Mordecai, you are opulent ; you can have

no necessity for abandoning the natural indulgences of life. You will only shorten your days by this toil.—At least why do you linger in this dungeon?”

He smiled grimly. “It is a dungeon, and I only value it the more. To this dungeon, as you call it, come, day by day, some of the haughtiest names in the land. If I lived in some west-end square, with my drawing-room filled with *Louis Quatorze* gew-gaws, and half-a-dozen idle fellows in livery to announce my visitors, I should not feel the hundredth part of the sense of superiority, the contemptuous triumph, the cool consciousness of the tyranny of gold, which I feel when I see my shrinking supplicants sitting down among my dusty boxes and everlasting cobwebs. I shall not suffer a grain of dust to be cleared away. It is my pride—it is my power—it is my revenge.”

His visage assumed so completely the expression, which I had always imagined for Shylock; that I should scarcely have been surprised if I had seen him produce the knife and the scales.

“You are surprised at all this,” said he after a pause, in which he fixed his searching eyes on me. “I see by your countenance, that you think me a Goth, a monster, a savage. But, I think myself none of those things. I am a man; and, if I am not much deceived, I am also a philosopher. My life has been a perpetual struggle through a world where every one worships self. My nation are scorned, and they struggle too. The Jew has been injured, not by the individual alone, but by all mankind;

and has he not a right to his revenge?—He has at last found the means. He is now absorbing the wealth of all nations. With the wealth, he will have the power; and another half century will not elapse, before all the grand questions of public council—nay, of national existence—must depend on the will of the persecuted sons of Abraham.—Who shall rise, or who shall fall; who shall make war, or who shall obtain peace; what republic shall be created, or what monarchy shall be rent in pieces; will henceforth be the questions, not of cabinets, but of the 'Change.—There are correspondences within this escritoire, worth all the wisdom of all the ministers on earth. There are commands at the point of this pen, which the proudest statesmanship dares not controvert. There is in the chests round you a ruler more powerful than ever before held the sceptre; the dictator of the globe; the true Despot—Gold."

After this wild burst, he sank into silence; until, to change the fever of his thoughts, I enquired for the health of his daughter. The father's heart overcame him again.

"My world threatens to be a lonely one, Mr. Marston," said he in a feeble voice. "You see a heart-broken man. Forgive the bitterness with which I have spoken.—Mariamne, I fear, is dying; and what is wealth now to me? I have left her in Poland among my people. She seemed to feel some slight enjoyment in wandering from place to place; but her last letter tells me, that she is wearied of

travelling, and has made up her mind to live and die where she may be surrounded by her unhappy nation. I remain here only to wind up my affairs, and in a week I quit England—and for ever.”

But a new object caught my glance. Mordecai—who, while he was thus speaking in paroxysms of alternate indignation and sorrow, had never for a moment ceased to turn over his books and boxes—had accidentally shaken a pile of tin cases from its pinnacle, and the whole rolled down at my feet. On one of them I saw, but, with no very strong surprise, the words—“Mortgage—Mortimer Castle.” The eyes of both glanced in the same direction.

“There,” said the Israelite, “you have your paternal acres in your hand ; your Plantagenet forests and your Tudor castle, all in a cubic foot. On the chair where you are now sitting, your lordly brother sat yesterday ; gathering up his skirts from the touch of every thing round him, and evidently suffering all the torture of a man of fashion, forced to smile on the holder of his last mortgage.—He is ruined, not worth a sixpence ; Melton and Newmarket have settled that question for him. But, do you recognize this hand ?” He drew a letter from his portfolio. I knew the writing : it was from my mother—on whom, now old and feeble, this accomplished *roué* had been urging the sale of her jointure. Helpless and alone, she had consented to this fatal measure ; and my noble brother’s visit to the Israelite, had been for the purpose of inducing him to make the purchase.

I started up in indignation; declared that the result must reduce my unfortunate parent to beggary; and demanded, by what means I could possibly prevent what was “neither more nor less than an act of plunder.”

“I see no means,” said Mordecai, coolly, “except your making the purchase yourself, and thus securing the jointure to her ladyship.—It is only ten thousand pounds.”

“*I* make the purchase! I have not the tenth part of the money upon earth. I ask *you*, what *is* to be done?”

“Your brother has here the power of selling; and will sell, if the starvation of fifty mothers stood in his way. Newmarket suffers no qualms of that kind; and, when his matters there are settled, his coachmaker’s bill for landaulets and britschkas will make him a pedestrian for the rest of his life. But *I* have refused the purchase; and, it was chiefly on this subject, that I was induced to invite you to my ‘dungeon,’ as you not unjustly term it.”

The picture of a mother, of whom I had always thought with the tenderness of a child; cast out in her old age to poverty, with the added bitterness of being thus cast out by her reliance on the honour of a cruel and treacherous son; rose so painfully before my eyes, that I lost all power of suggesting the remedy; and could only look the distress which I felt. Mordecai gazed on me with an enquiring countenance.

“You love this mother, Mr. Marston.—You are

a good son. We Israelites, with all our faults, respect the feelings which ‘honour the father and the mother.’ It is a holy love, and well earned by the cares and sorrows of parentage.” He paused, and covered his forehead with his gigantic hands. I could hear him murmur the name of his daughter. A loud knocking, which announced a fashionable arrival at his door, startled him from his reverie.

Suddenly, again bustling among his papers, he said—“This is the hour when your brother was to call for my definitive answer. Now, listen to me. The jointure must be purchased.” I bit my lip; but he did not leave me long in suspense—“And *you* shall be the purchaser.” He wrote a cheque for the amount, and placed it in my hand.

“Mordecai, you are a noble fellow! But, how am I to act upon this? I am worth nothing. I might as well attempt to repay millions.”

“Well, so be it, Mr. Marston. You are a man of honour, and a good son. You will repay it when you can. I exact but one condition: that you will come and visit Mariamne and me in Poland.”

The opening of the hall-door put an end to our interview.

“That is your brother,” said he. “You must not see him, as I choose to keep the name of the purchaser to myself. Take your mother’s letter with you; and give her my best advice to write no more—at least, to such correspondents as his lordship.”

I rose to take my leave. He followed me hastily;

and, holding me by the hand, said—"Another condition I have to make.—It is, that not a syllable of all that has passed between us on this subject, shall be suffered to transpire. I should make but a bad figure on 'Change, if I were suspected of transactions in that style. Remember, it must be a profound secret to all the world."

"Even to my wife?" I asked. "Is *she* included?"

"No, no," he replied, with a faint laugh; "I look upon you as a mere mortal still.—All vows are void in their nature, which require impossibilities in their execution." We parted.

I told my little city tale to Clotilde. She wept and smiled alternately, as I told it. Mordecai received all his due praise; and we pledged ourselves to find out his Mariamne, in whatever corner of the Lithuanian wilderness she might have hidden her fantastic heart and head. But I had now another duty. Within a few hours, we were on our way to the jointure-house. It was a picturesque old building, the residence of the Father Abbot, in the times before the insatiable hand of Somerset had fallen upon the monasteries. We reached it in the twilight of a gentle day, when all its shrubs and flowers were filling the air with freshness and fragrance. I found my mother less enfeebled than I had expected; and still affectionate and tender, as she had always been to her long-absent son. She was still fully susceptible of the honours which had now opened before me. Clotilde almost knelt before her noble air and

venerable beauty. My mother could not grow weary with gazing on the expressive countenance of my beautiful wife. I had secured my parent's comfort for life ; and I, too, was happy.

CHAPTER XLI.

"The star that rules thy destiny,
Was ruled, ere earth began, by me.
It was a world as fresh and fair,
As e'er revolved round sun, in air.
Its course was free and regular,
Space bosomed not a lovelier star.
The hour arrived, and it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless comet, and a curse,
The menace of the universe."—*Song of the Spirit.*

BYRON.

My embassy, like all other embassies, had its vexations; but on the whole I had reason to congratulate myself on its acceptance. My reception at St. Petersburg was most distinguished; I had arrived at a fortunate period. The French expedition to Egypt had alarmed the Russian councils for Constantinople; a possession to which every Russian looks, in due time, as naturally as to the right of his copecks and caftan. But the victory of Aboukir, which had destroyed the French fleet, again raised the popular exultation, and English heroism was the

topic of every tongue. The incomparable campaign of the Russian army in Italy ; the recovery, in three months, of all which it had cost the power of France, and the genius of her greatest general, in two years of pitched battles, sanguinary sieges, artful negotiation, and incessant intrigue, to obtain ; excited the nation to the highest degree of enthusiasm, and the embassy basked in the broadest sunshine of popularity. *Fête* now succeeded *fête* ; the standards taken in Suwarrow's battles, the proudest trophies ever won by Russian arms, were carried in procession to the cathedral ; illuminations of the capital, balls in the palaces, and public sports on the waters and banks of the Neva, kept St. Petersburg in a perpetual tumult of joy.

But, all was not sunshine : the character of the sovereign in a despotism demands perpetual study ; and Paul was freakish and headstrong beyond all human calculation. No man was more misunderstood at a distance, nor less capable of being understood near. He had some striking qualities. He was generous, bold, and high-principled ; but the simplest accident would turn all those qualities into their reverse. To-day he was ready to devote himself to the cause of Europe ; every soldier of Russia must march :—but, when the morrow came, he revoked the order for his troops, and cashiered the secretaries who had been rash enough to take him at his word.

The secret was in his brain ; disease was gathering on his intellect, and he was daily becoming more

dangerous to those nearest him. The result was long foreseen. In Spain, Gil Blas recommends, that no man who wishes for long life should quarrel with his cook. In Russia, let no Czar arouse the suspicions of his courtiers. As the Pagans hung chaplets on the statues of their gods, in victory, and flogged them in defeat; the Russians, in every casualty of their arms, turned a scowling eye upon their liege lord: and the retreat of Suwarrow, the greatest of Russian soldiers, from Switzerland, at once stripped the Emperor of all his popularity.

My position now became doubly anxious. Even despots love popularity, and the Czar was alternately furious, and frightened, at its loss.—Guards were planted in every part of the city, with orders to disperse all groups. Every man who looked at the Imperial equipage as it passed through the streets, was in danger of being arrested as an assassin. Nobles were suddenly exiled; none knew why, or where. The cloud was thickening round the palace. It is a perilous thing, to be the one object on which every eye involuntarily turns, as the source of public evil. Rumours of conspiracy rose, and died, and were heard again. In free governments public discontents have room to escape, and they escape. In despotisms they have no room to evaporate, and they condense, until they explode. St. Petersburg at length became a place of silence and solitude by day, and of murmurs and meetings by night. It reminded one of Rome in the days of Nero; and I

looked with perpetual alarm, for the catastrophe of Nero.

The Russian is a submissive man, and even capable of strong attachment to the throne: but there is no spot of the earth where national injury is more deeply resented; and Paul had been regarded as tarnishing the fame of Russia. His abandonment of Suwarrow—a warrior, of whom the annals of the Russian army will bear record to the end of time—had stung all classes. More than a soldier, Suwarrow was a great military genius. He gained battles without tactics, and in defiance of them. He had astonished the German tacticians by the fierce rapidity of his movements; he had annihilated the French armies in Italy by the desperate daring of his attacks. Wherever Suwarrow came, he was conqueror. In his whole career he had never been beaten. The soldiery told numberless tales of his eccentricity; laughed at, mimicked, and adored him. The nation honoured him as the national warrior.

But, the failure of some of his detached corps in Switzerland had embarrassed the campaign; and Paul, capricious as the winds, hastily recalled him. The popular indignation now burst forth in every form of anger. Placards fixed at night on the palace walls; gipsy ballads sung in the streets; maskers, at the countless balls of the nobles; satires in quaint verse; and national proverbs, showed the public resentment to be universal. Every incident furnished some contemptuous comment.—The Czar had lately

built a wing to one of the palaces of Catharine. The addition wanted the stateliness of the original fabric. This epigram was posted on the building, in angry Slavonic:—

“One built a palace, one a stall.
One marble ; one a plaster wall.
One sure to stand ; one sure to fall.
So much for Catharine—and for Paul !”

In the midst of this growing perplexity, the English messenger arrived. His tidings had been long anticipated, yet they came with the effect of a thunder-clap. The cabinet had resigned ! I of course now waited only the order to return. But, in the meantime, this event formidably increased the difficulties of my position. Foreigners will never allow themselves to comprehend the nature of any English transaction whatever. They deal with them all, as if they were scenes on a stage. In the incorrigible absurdity of their theatrical souls, they imagine a parliamentary defeat to be a revolution, and the change of a ministry the fall of an empire.

Paul instantly cast off all his old partialities. He pronounced England undone.—The star of France was to be the light of the west ; he himself to be the luminary of the east. The bold ambition of Catharine was to be realized ; however, without the system or the sagacity of her imperial genius. But, Paul was soon to learn the terrible lesson of a despotic government. The throne, separated from the people, is the more in peril the more widely that it is separated.—The people *would* not be carried along with their master to the

feet of his new political idol. The substantial virtues of the national character resisted that French alliance, which must be begun at once by prostration and ingratitude. France was their new taunter. England was their old ally. They hated France for its republican insolence; they honoured England for its resolute determination to fight out the battle, not for its own sake alone, but for the cause of all nations.—Paul, in the attempt to partition the globe, was narrowing his supremacy to his own sepulchre.

Yet, this time of national gloom was the most splendid period of the court. With the double purpose of recovering his popularity, and concealing his negotiations, Paul plunged into the most extraordinary festivity. Balls, masquerades, and *fêtes*, succeeded each other with restless extravagance. But the contrast of the saturnine Emperor, with the sudden change of his court was too powerful. It bore the look of desperation; though, for what purpose, was still a mystery to the million. I heard many a whisper among the diplomatic circle, that this whirl of life, this taste for fierce dissipation, was, in all Russian reigns, the sure precursor of a catastrophe; though none could yet venture to predict its nature. It was like the furious and frenzied indulgence of a crew in a condemned ship; breaking up the chests and drinking the liquors; in the conviction that none could survive the gale.

Even I, with all my English disregard of the speculative frivolities, which to the foreigner are substance and facts, was startled by the increasing

glare of those hurried and feverish festivities. More than once, as I entered the imperial saloon, crowded with the civil and military uniforms of every court of Europe, and exhibiting at once European taste and Asiatic magnificence, I could scarcely suppress the feeling that I was only entering the most stately of theatres; where, with all the temporary glitter of the stage, the sounds of the orchestra, and the passion and poetry of the characters—the fifth act was preparing, and the curtain was to fall on the death of nobles and kings.

The impression that evil was to come, already seemed to be universal. Rumours of popular conspiracy, fresh discoveries by the police, and new tales of imperial eccentricity, kept the public mind in constant fretfulness. At length, I received the formal communication of a “challenge” from the Czar to my sovereign, along with all the other crowned heads of Europe, to meet him in a *champ-clos*, and, sword in hand, decide the quarrels of nations. With this despatch came an invitation for the whole diplomatic body to a masquerade! in which all were commanded to appear as knights, in armour—the Czar, as grand-master of the Order of Malta, exhibiting himself in the panoply, in which he was to settle the disputes of mankind.

Perplexities like those form a large share of the trials of the foreign ambassador. To attend the *fête* was embarrassing; but to decline the invitation, would have been equivalent to demanding my passports. And I must acknowledge, that if the eye

was to be gratified by the most superb, and the most curious, of all displays, never was there an occasion more fitted for its indulgence. All the armouries of Europe, and of Asia, seemed to have been searched for the arms and ornaments of this assemblage. The Kremlin had given up its barbaric shields and caps of bronze. We had the plate-mail of the Crusader; the gold-inlaid morions and cuirasses of France; the silver chain-mail of the Circassian; the steel corslet of the German chivalry. Those, with a whole host of the various and rich equipments of the Greek, the Hungarian, the Moresco, and the Turkoman, made the Winter palace a blaze of knighthood.

Yet, to me, after the first excitement, the whole conveyed a deep impression of melancholy. It irresistibly reminded me of the last ceremonial of dead sovereigns, the "Chapelle Ardente." Even the curtains which drooped round the throne, fringed with jewels as they were, to me looked funereal. The immense golden candelabra were to me the lights above a bier. I almost imagined, that I could see the sword and sceptre laid across the coffin, and all of the Lord of Empire that remained, a corpse within.

I was aroused from my reluctant reverie, by the approach of a group of masks, who came dancing towards the recess where I had retired, wearied with the general glitter, and the tumult of the *fête*. One of the casements opened into the famous Conservatory; and I sat, enjoying the scents of the thousand flowers and shrubs of, perhaps, the finest collection in the world. But, in the shade, the group

had evidently overlooked me; for they began to speak of matters which they could not have designed for a stranger's ear. The conduct of the Czar, the wrongs of Russia, and the "necessity of coming to a decision," were the topics. Suddenly, as if to avert suspicion, one of the group struck up a popular air on the little three-stringed guitar, which throws the Russian crowd into such ecstasies; and they began a dance, accompanying it by a murmured chorus, which soon convinced me of the dangerous neighbourhood into which I had fallen. The words became well known afterwards. No language excels the Russian in energy; but I must give them in the weakness of a translation.

The Neva may rush
 To its fountain again;
 The bill of a bird
 Lake Ladoga may drain;
 The blast from the Pole
 May be held in a chain;
 But the cry of a Nation
 Was never in vain!

When the bones of our chiefs
 Feed the wolf and the kite;
 When the spurs of our squadrons
 Are bloody with flight;
 When the Black Eagle's banner
 Is torn from its height;
 Then, dark-hearted dreamer!
 Beware of the *night*!

I hear in the darkness
 The tread of the bold;
 They stop not for iron,
 They stop not for gold;

But the Sword has an edge,
And the Scarf has a fold.
Proud master of millions,
Thy tale has been told !

Now the chambers are hush'd,
And the strangers are gone !
And the sire is no sire,
And the son is no son,
And the mightiest of Earth
Sleeps for ever alone,
The worm for his brother,
The clay for his throne !

My conviction was complete, when in the whirl of the dance, a small roll of paper dropped from the robe of one of the maskers, and fell at my feet. In taking it up to return it to him, I saw that it was a list of names, and, at the head, a name which, from private information, I knew to be involved in dark political purposes. The thought flashed across me, in connexion with the chorus which I had just heard, that the paper was of too much importance to be suffered to leave my possession.—The life of the sovereign might be involved. The group, who had been evidently startled by my sudden appearance among them, now surrounded me, and the loser of the paper insisted on its instant surrender. The violence of his demand only confirmed my resolution. He grew more agitated still, and the group seized me. I laid my hand upon my sword. This measure stopped them for the moment. But in the next, I saw a knife brandished in the air, and felt myself wounded in the arm. My attempt to grasp the weapon had alone saved me from

its being buried in my heart. But the fracas now attracted notice ; a crowd pressed towards us, and the group suddenly scattered away, leaving me still in possession of the paper.

My wound bled, and I felt faint, and desired to be led into the open air. My mask was taken off ; and this was scarcely done, when I heard my name pronounced, and saw the welcome countenance of my friend Guiscard by my side. He had arrived but on that day, on a mission from his court ; had, with his usual eagerness of friendship, gone to enquire for me at the hotel of the embassy ; and thus followed me to the *fête* at the critical time. As he supported me to my equipage, I communicated the circumstances of the rencontre to his clear and generous heart ; and he fully agreed with me on the duty, of instantly apprising the Czar of his probable danger. As I was unable to move through pain and feebleness, he offered to take the list with him, and demand an interview with the sovereign himself, if possible ; or, if not, with the governor of the palace. The paper contained not only names of individuals, all, long before, objects of public suspicion, but a sketch of the imperial apartments, and, at the bottom, the words,—“three hours after midnight.” I looked at my watch, it was already half-past two. This might, or might not be, the appointed night for this dreadful business ; but, if it were, there was but one half hour between the throne and the grave.

Guiscard hurried off, leaving me in the deepest anxiety, but promising to return as speedily as in his

power. But he came not. My anxiety grew intolerable; hour after hour passed away, while I reckoned minute after minute, as if they were so much drained from my own existence. Even, if I had been able to move, it was impossible to know where to follow him. His steps might have been watched. Doubtless the conspirators were on the alert to prevent any approach to the palace. He might have fallen by the pistol of some of those men, who had not scrupled to conspire against their monarch. The most miserable of nights at length wore away; but it was only to be succeeded by the most fearful of mornings. The career of Paul was closed! On the entrance of the chamberlains into his sleeping apartment, the unhappy Czar was found dead. There could be no doubt that he had perished by treason. A scarf was still drawn tight round his throat. He had been strangled. The intelligence no sooner spread through the capital, than it produced a burst of national sorrow. All his errors were forgotten. All his good qualities were remembered.

But where was my gallant and excellent friend—Guiscard?—Of him I heard nothing.

Another week of suspense, and he appeared. His history was of the most singular kind. On the night when I had last seen him, he had made his way through all obstacles into the palace, and been promised a private interview with the Czar. ' But while he urged that no time should be lost, he had sufficient proof that there could be no chance of an interview. A succession of apologies was made: the

‘Czar was at supper’—‘he was engaged with the minister’—‘he had gone to rest.’ In total hopelessness of communicating his pressing intelligence in person, he at length consented to seal the roll, and place it in the hands of one of the officers of rank in the household. But that officer himself was in the conspiracy. The paper was immediately destroyed; and the bearer of it was considered to be too dangerous to be sent back.

He was put under arrest in an apartment of the palace, and told that his life depended on his silence. He urged his diplomatic character in vain. The only answer was the sword of the conspirator turned to his throat. But within the week the revolution was complete, and he was set at liberty. A new monarch, a new government, a new feeling, followed this dangerous act. But the character of the young monarch was made to be popular; the reign of caprice was at an end. The empire felt relieved; and Russia began the most glorious period of her national history.

My mission was now at an end, for I refused to hold the embassy under a rival cabinet; but I carried with me from St. Petersburg two trophies:—the former was the treaty concluded by Paul with France for the march of an army, in conjunction with a French column of 30,000 men, to invade India—a document which had hitherto baffled all diplomatic research; the other was the pathetic and noble letter of Alexander to the British sovereign, proposing a restoration of the national friendship.

I took my leave of the Russian court with a most

gracious audience of its new monarch. I saw him long afterwards, under different circumstances, struggling with a tremendous war, pressed by every difficulty which could beset the throne, and throwing the last melancholy and doubtful cast for the independence of Europe. But, both now and then, I saw him, what nature had made him—a noble being. His stature was tall and commanding; and he was one of the most striking figures of his court when in the uniform of his guards. But his manner was still superior—it was at once affable and dignified; he spoke of European interests with intelligence, of his own intentions with dignity; and of England with a rational respect for its spirit and institutions. Of his own country, he expressed himself with candour. “I feel,” said he, “that I have a great trust laid on me, and I am determined to fulfil it. I shall not make the throne a bed of roses. There is still much to be done, and I shall do what I can. I have the advantage of a fine material in the people. No being is at once more susceptible of improvement, and more grateful for it, than the Russian. He has quick faculties and an honest heart. If the common hazards of empire should come, I know that he will not desert me. In the last extremity of human fortunes, I shall not desert him.”

Those generous declarations were gallantly realized on both sides within a few years. I was not then aware that the Imperial prediction would be soon brought to the test. But it was gloriously fulfilled in the flames of Moscow, and proudly registered on the fallen throne of Napoleon.

Impatient as I was to reach England, I left St. Petersburg with regret. Clotilde left it with those feelings which belong to the finer fancy of woman. She remembered it as the scene, where she had enjoyed the most dazzling portion of her life ; where every countenance had met her with smiles, and every tongue was prodigal of praise ; where the day rose on the promise of new enjoyments, and the night descended on royal festivity. As we drove along the banks of the Neva, she more than once stopped the carriage, to give herself a parting glance at the long vista of stately buildings, which she was then to look upon, perhaps, for the last time.

The *coup-d'œil* was certainly of the most striking order, for we had commenced our journey on the evening of one of the national festivals ; and we thus had the whole population, in all their holiday dresses, giving animation to the general aspect of the massive and gigantic architecture. The Neva was covered with barges of the most graceful form ; the fronts of the citizens' houses were hung with decorations ; music sounded from a vast orchestra in front of the palace ; and the air re-echoed with the voices of thousands and tens of thousands, all evidently determined to be happy for the time. We both gazed in silence and admiration. The carriage had accidentally drawn up in view of the little hut, which is still preserved in the Neva as the dwelling of Peter. I saw a tear glistening on the long eyelash of my lovely fellow traveller.

“ If I wanted a proof,” said she, “ of the intel-

lectual greatness of man, I should find it in this spot. I may see in that hut the emblem of his mind. That a Russian, two centuries ago—almost before the name of Russia was known in Europe—while its court had scarcely emerged from the feuds of barbarous factions, and its throne had been but just rescued from the hands of the Tartar—should have conceived the design of such an empire, and should have crowned his design with such a capital, is to me the most memorable effort of a ruling mind, within all human recollection.”

“Clotilde, I was not aware that you were inclined to give the great Czar so tender a tribute,” I said laughingly, at her embarrassment in the discovery of her emotion.

Truth was in her reply. “I agree in the common censure of the darker portions of his course. But I can now judge of him only by what I see. Who is to know the truth of his private history? What can be more unsafe than to judge of the secret actions of princes, from the interested or ignorant narratives of a giddy court, or of foreign enemies? But the evidence round us allows of no deception. These piles of marble are unanswerable ;—these are the vindications of kings. The man who, sitting in that hut, in the midst of the howling wilderness, imagined the existence of such a city rising round him and his line—at once bringing his country into contact with Europe, and erecting a monument of national greatness, to which Europe itself, in its thousand years of progress, has no equal—must have had a nature made

for the highest tasks of human advancement.—Of all the panegyrics of Imperial life, St. Petersburg is the most Imperial.”

We passed rapidly through the Russian provinces, and, intending to embark in one of our frigates cruising the Baltic, felt all the delight of having at length left the damp and dreary forests of Livonia far down in the horizon, and again feeling the breezes blowing from that ocean, which the Englishman instinctively regards as a portion of his home. But, as we drove along the smooth sands which line so many leagues of the Baltic, and enjoyed with the full sense of novelty the various contrast of sea and shore, we were startled by the roar of guns from the ramparts of Riga, followed by the peal of bells. What victory, what defeat, what great event, did those announce? The intelligence at length broke on us at the gates; and it was well worth all our interest. “Peace with France.”—The English ambassador had arrived in Paris.—“War was at end, and the world was to be at rest once more.” I changed my route immediately, and flew on the road to Paris.

My life was destined to be a succession of “scenes.” It had been thrown into a whirl of memorable incidents, any one of which would have served for the tumult of fifty years, and for the meditation of the fifty after. But this was the period of powerful, sometimes of terrible, vicissitudes. All ranks of men were reached by them. Kings and statesmen only felt them first: they penetrated to the peasant. The Continent underwent a moral convulsion—an

outpouring of the general elements of society—like that of some vast inundation, sweeping away the landmarks, and uprooting the produce of the soil ; until it subsided, leaving the soil in some places irreparably stripped—in others, filled with a new fertility.

I found France in a state of the highest exultation. The national cry was, “ that she had covered herself with glory ;” and to earn that cry, probably, no Frenchman who ever existed, would hesitate to march to Timbuctoo, or swim across the Atlantic. The name of “ conquest ” is a spell which no brain, from Calais to Bayonne, has ever thought of resisting. The same spell lives, masters, domineers over the national mind, to this hour ; and will last, long after Paris has dropped into the depths of its own catacombs, and its fifteen fortresses are mouldered into mounds, as shapeless as the towers of Babylon.

But, it will be impossible, to tell future ages the scene which France then presented to the mind. If objects are capable of record, impressions are beyond the power of the pen. No image can be conveyed to posterity, of the sensations which crowded on Europe in the course of the French Revolution—the rapidity, the startling lustre, and the deep despair ; as it went forth crushing all that the earth had of solid or sacred. It was now only in its midway. The pause had come ; but it was only the pause in the hurricane—the still heavier trial was at hand. Even as a stranger, I could see that it was but a lull.

Every thing that met the eye in Paris was a pre-

parative for war. The soldier was every thing, and every where. I looked in vain for the Republican costumes, which I so fearfully remembered. They had been flung aside for the uniform of the Imperial Guard; or were to be seen only on a few haggard and desolate men, who came out in the twilight, or sat in silence, and gloomy dreams of revenge, in some suburb *café*. Where were the deadly tribunals, with their drunken judges, their half-naked assassins, and the eternal clank of the guillotines?—all vanished; the whole sullen furniture of the Republican drama had been flung behind the scenes, and the stage was filled with the song and the dance—the pageant and the feast—with all France gazing and delighted at the spectacle.

But, my still stronger curiosity was fixed on the one man, who had been the soul of the transformation. I have before my eye at this moment his slender and *spirituel* figure; his calm, but most subtle glance; and the incomparable expression of his smile. His face was then classic—the *ideal* of thought; and, when Canova afterwards transferred it to marble, he could not have made it less like flesh and blood. It was intensely pale—pure, profound, Italian.

CHAPTER XLII.

“ Why, then, I do but dream on Sovereignty,
Like one that stands upon a promontory,
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying, he'll lade it dry, to have his way.”

SHAKESPEARE.

CHANGE is the master-spirit of Europe, as permanency is of Asia. The contrast is in the nature of things. However the caprice, the genius, or the necessities of the sitter on the throne may attempt to impress permanency on the habits of the West, or mutability on those of the East, his success must be but partial. In Europe, we have a perpetual movement of minds, a moral ocean, to which tides and currents are an operation of nature. But the Caspian or the Euxine is not more defined by its limits of rock and mountain, or more inexorably separated from the general influx of the waters which roll round the world, than the Asiatic mind is from following the free course, and sharing the bold and stormy innovations, of Europe.

But the most rapid and total change within human memory, was the one which was now before my eye. I felt as some of the old alchymists might feel in their laboratories, with all their crucibles heating, all their alembics boiling, all their strange materials in full effervescence ; and their eyes fixed, in doubt, and perhaps in awe, on the powerful and hazardous products about to result from combinations untried before ; on amalgams which might shatter the roof above their heads, or vapours, which might extinguish their existence by a blast of poison.

I had left Paris a Democracy. I found it a Despotism. I had left it a melancholy prey to the multitude ; a startling theatre of alternate fury and dejection ; of cries for revenge, and supplications for bread ; of the tyranny of the mob, and the misery of the nation. I now found it the most striking contrast to that scene of despair ;—Paris the headquarters of a military government ; the Tuileries the palace of a conqueror ; every sound martial ; the eye dazzled every where by the spoils of the German and Italian sovereignties ; the nation flushed with victory. Still, the public aspect exhibited peculiarities, which interested me the more, that they could never have appeared in older times, and probably will never return.

In the midst of military splendour there was a wild, haggard, and unhappy character stamped on all things. The streets of the capital had not yet felt the influence of that imperial taste which was to render it an imperial city. I saw the same shattered suburbs,

the same deep, narrow, and winding streets, the same dismal lanes ; in which I had witnessed so often the gatherings of the armed multitude, and which seemed made for popular commotion. Mingled with those wild wrecks and gloomy places of refuge, rather than dwellings ; I saw, with their ancient ornaments, and even with their armorial bearings and gilded shields not yet entirely defaced, the palaces of the noblesse and blood-royal of France, the remnants of ten centuries of a monarchy, which had been powerful enough to reduce the bold tribes of the Franks to a civilized slavery, and glittering enough to make them in love with their chains.

If I could have imagined, in the nineteenth century, a camp of banditti on its most showy scale—a government of Condottieri, with its most famous captain at its head—every where a compilation of arms and spoils, the rude habits of the robber combined with the pomp of military triumph—I should have said, that the realization was before me.

The Palais Royal was still the chief scene of all Parisian vitality. But the mob orators were to be found there no more. The walks and *cafés* were now crowded with bold figures, epauleted and embroidered, laughing and talking with the easy air of men who felt themselves masters, and who evidently regarded every thing round them as the furnishing of a camp.

The land had now undergone its third stage of that great spell, by which nations are urged and roused at the will of a few.—The crosier was the

first wand of the magician, then came the sceptre ; we were now under the spell of the sword. I was delighted at the change, from the horrid form of popular domination, to the showy supremacy of soldiership. It still had its evils. But the guillotine had disappeared. Savage hearts and sanguinary hands no longer made the laws, and executed them. Instead of the groans and execrations, the cries of rage and clamours of despair, which once echoed through all the streets, I now heard only popular songs and dances, and saw all the genuine evidences of that rejoicing, with which the multitude had thrown off the most deadly of all tyrannies—its own.

The foreigner shapes every thing into the picturesque, and all the picturesque of France was now military. Every regiment which passed through Paris on its way from the frontier, was reviewed, in front of the palace, by the First Consul ; and those reviews formed the finest of all military spectacles, for each had a character and a history of its own.

The regiment which had stormed the bridge of Lodi ; the regiment which had headed the assault on the *tête-du-pont* at Mantua ; the regiment which had led the march at the passage of the St. Bernard ; the regiment which had formed the advance of Dessaix at Marengo—all had their separate distinctions, and were received with glowing speeches and appropriate honours by the chief of the state. The popular vanity was flattered by a perpetual pageant, and that pageant wholly different from the tinsel displays of

the monarchy :—no representation of legends, trivial in their origin, and ridiculous in their memory ; but the revival of transactions, in which every man of France felt almost a personal interest, which were the true principles of the new system, and whose living actors were seen passing, hour by hour, before the national eye. All was vivid reality ; where all had been false glitter, in the days of the Bourbons, and all sullenness and fear, in the days of the Democracy. The reality might still be rough and stern, but it was substantial, and not without its share of the superb ; it had the sharpness and weight, and it had also the shining, of the sabre. But this was not all ; nothing could be more subtly consecutive than the whole progress of the head of the government. In a superstitious age, it might have been almost believed, that some wizard had stood by his cradle, and sung his destiny ; or that, like the greatest creation of the greatest of all dramatists, he had been met in some mountain pass, or on some lonely heath, by the weird sisters predicting his charmed supremacy.

At this period he was palpably training the Republic to the sight of a dictatorship. The return of the troops through Paris had already accustomed the populace to the sight of military power.

The movement of vast masses of men by a word, the simplicity of the great military machine, its direct obedience to the master-hand, and its tremendous strength ; all were a continual lesson to the popular

mind. I looked on the progress of this lesson with infinite interest; for, in its first displays, I thought that I was about to see a new government—Republicanism in its most majestic aspect, giving a new development of the art of ruling man, and exhibiting a shape of domination loftier and more energetic than the world had ever yet seen. Still, I was aware of the national weakness. Nor was I without a strong suspicion of the hazard of human advance, when entrusted to the caprice of any being in the form of man, and, above all, of one who had won his way to power by arms. Yet, I was inclined to conceive, that society had here reached a point of division; a ridge, from which the streams of power naturally took different directions; that the struggles of the democracy were but like the bursting of those monsoons which mark the distinction of seasons in the East; or the ruggedness of those regions of rock and precipice, of roaring torrent and sunless valley, through which the Alpine traveller must toil, before he can bask in the luxuriance of the Italian plain. Attached as I was, in the highest degree, to the principle of monarchy, and regarding it as the safest anchorage of the state, still, how was I to know, that moral nature as well as physical, might not have her reserves of power; that the science of government itself might not have its undetected secrets, as well as the science of the globe; that the quiverings and convulsions of society at this moment, obviously alike beyond calculation and control, might not be only evidences of the same vast agencies;

counterparts, in heights beyond the human eye, guide the swellings of the ocean.

Those were the days of speculation, and I indulged in them, like the rest of the world. Every man stood, as the islander of the South Sea may stand on his shore, contemplating the conflict of fire and water, while the furnaces of the centre are forcing up new lands in clouds of vapour and gusts of whirlwind. All was strange, undefined, and startling. One thing alone seemed certain ; that the past *régime* was gone, never to return ; that a great barrier had suddenly been dropped between the two sovereignties ; that the living generation stood on the dividing pinnacle between the languid vices of the extinguished system and the daring, perhaps guilty, energies of the system to come. Behind me lay the region of the past, the long level of wasted national faculties, emasculating superstitions, the graceful feebleness of a sensual nobility, and the superb follies of a haughty and yet helpless throne. Before me rose a realm of boundless extent, but requiring frames of vigour, and feelings undismayed by difficulty ;—a horizon of hills and clouds, where the gale blew fresh and the tempest rolled ; where novel difficulties must be met at every step, but still where, if man trod at all, he must ascend at every step, where every clearing of the horizon must give him a more comprehensive prospect, and where every struggle with the rudeness of the soil, or the roughness of the elements, must enhance the vigour of the nerve that encountered them.

Those were dreams ; with all my sense of its fickleness, I had not made due allowance for the nature of the foreign mind. I was yet to learn its ready temptation by every trivialty of the hour ; its demand of extravagant excitement to rouse it into action, and its utter apathy where its passions were not bribed. I had imagined a national sovereignty, righteous, calm, and resolute, such as might have been trained by the precepts of a Milton and a Locke ; I found only an Italian despotism, trained by the romance of Rousseau, and the scepticism of Voltaire.

Every day in the capital now had its celebration, and all exhibited the taste and talent of the First Consul ; but one characteristic *fête* at length woke me to the true design of this extraordinary man—the inauguration of the Legion of Honour. It was the first step to the throne, and a step of incomparable daring and dexterity ; it was the virtual restoration of an aristocracy, in the presence of a people, who had raved with the rage of frenzy against all titles, had torn down the coats-of-arms from the gates of the noblesse, and shattered even the marbles of their sepulchres. Republicanism had been already “pushed from its stool,” but this was the chain which was to keep it fixed to the ground.

The ceremonial was held in the Hôtel des Invalides ; and all the civil pomp of the consulate was combined with all the military display. The giving of the crosses of honour called forth in succession the names, of all those soldiers whose exploits had rung through Europe, in the campaigns of the Alps

and the Rhine. Nothing could be more in the spirit of a fine historic picture, or in the semblance of a fine antique drama. There stood the first men of the French councils and armies ; surrounded by the monuments of their ancestors in the national glory, the statues of the Condés and Turennes, whose memory formed so large a portion of the popular pride, and whose achievements, so solid a record in the history of French triumph. To those high sources of sentiment, were added stately decoration and religious solemnity ; and in the chorus of rich voices, the sounds of martial harmony, the acclamations of the countless multitude within and without, and the thunder of cannon ; was completed the most magnificent, but the most ominous, of all ceremonials.

It was not difficult to see, that this day was the consecration of France to absolute power, and of all her faculties to conquest. Like the Roman herald, she had put on, in the temple, the robe of defiance to all nations. She was to be, from this day of devotement, the nation of war. It was less visible, that upon the field of Marengo perished the Democracy ; than that in this temple was sacrificed the Republic. The throne was still only in vision ; but its outline was clear, and that outline was colossal.

In my intercourse with the men of the new *régime*, I had associated chiefly with the military. Their language was frank and free, and their knowledge was more direct and extensive on the topics, which I most desired to comprehend, the state of their foreign conquests. One of those, a colonel of

dragoons, who had served with Moreau, and whose partialities, at least, did not lean to the rival hero; came hurriedly to me, at an early hour one morning, to "take his leave."—"But why, and where?" "He was ordered to join his regiment immediately, in march for the coast of the Channel." "To invade us?" I asked laughingly. "Not exactly yet, perhaps; but it may come to that in good time.—I grieve to tell you," added my gallant friend, with more of gravity than I thought he could possibly have thrown into his good-humoured features, "that we are to have war. The matter is perfectly determined in the Tuileries; and at the levee to-day there will probably be a *scene*.—In the mean time, take my information as certain; and prepare for your return to England, with the shortest possible delay." He took his departure.

I attended the levee on that memorable day, and saw the *scene*. The Place du Carrousel was unusually crowded with troops, which the First Consul was passing in review. The whole population seemed to have conjectured the event of the day; for I had never seen them in such numbers, nor with such an evident look of general anxiety. The Tuileries was filled with officers of state, with leading military men, and members of the Senate and Tribunat; the whole body of the foreign ambassadors were present; and yet the entire assemblage was kept waiting, until the First Consul had inspected even the firelocks of his guard, and the shoes in their knapsacks. The diplomatists, as they saw from the casements of

the palace this tardy operation going on, exchanged glances with each other at its contemptuous trifling. Some of the *militaires* exhibited the impatience of men accustomed to prompt measures ; the civilians smiled and shrugged their shoulders ; but all felt that there was a purpose in the delay.

At length, the drums beat the flourish, for the close of the review ; the First Consul galloped up to the porch of the palace, flung himself from his charger, sprang up the staircase, and without regard to etiquette, hurried into the *salle*, followed by a cloud of aides-de-camp and chamberlains. The Circle of Presentations was formed, and he walked hastily round it, saying a few rapid words to each. I observed, for the first time, an aide-de-camp moving on the outside of the circle, step for step, and with his eye steadily marking the gesture of each individual to whom the First Consul spoke in his circuit. This was a new precaution, and indicative of the time. Till then he had run all risks, and might have been the victim of any daring hand. But now, whether from an affectation of hazard, or from some of those stories of conspiracy, which were the *trade* of the *police*, he was thus on his guard. The very countenance of the First Consul was as characteristic as his career. It exhibited the most unusual contrast of severity and softness ; nothing could be sterner than the gathering of his brow, nothing more flattering than his smile. On this occasion I saw them both in perfection. To the general diplomatic circle his lip wore the smile. But, when he

reached the spot where the British ambassador stood, we had the storm at once. With his darkest frown, and with every feature in agitation, he suddenly burst out into a tirade against England—reproaching her with contempt of treaties; with an absolute desire for war; with a perpetual passion for embroiling Europe; with forming armaments in the midst of peace; with challenging France to an encounter which must provoke European hostilities; with the arrogant ambition of ruling the globe!

The English ambassador listened in silence, but with the air of a high-spirited man, who would concede nothing to menace; and with the countenance of an intelligent one, who could have easily answered declamation by argument. But, for this answer there was no time. The First Consul, having delivered his diatribe, suddenly sprang round, darted through the crowd, and was lost to the view. That scene was decisive. War was inevitable. I took my friend's advice, ordered post-horses, and within the twenty-four hours, I saw with infinite delight the cliffs of Dover shining in the dawn.

I am not writing a history. I am merely throwing together events separated by great chasms, in the course of a life. My life was all incident; sometimes connected with public transactions of the first magnitude, sometimes wholly personal; and thus I hasten on to the close of a public career which has ended; and of an existence diversified by cloud and sunshine, but on the whole happy.

The war began; it was unavoidable. The objects

of our great adversary have been since stripped of all disguise. His system had been to lull England by peace, until he had amassed a force which might crush her at the outbreak of a war. But his passion overcame his policy. There are higher impulses acting on the world than human ambition; the great machine is not altogether guided by man. England had the cause of nations in her charge; her principles were truth, honour, and justice. She had retained the reverence of her forefathers for the Sanctuary; and the same guidance which in the beginning had taught her wisdom, ultimately crowned her with victory. It was my fortune to live through a period of the most overwhelming vicissitudes of nations, and of the great disturber himself, who had caused those vicissitudes.—I saw Napoleon at the head of 500,000 men on the Niemen; I saw him reduced to 50,000 on the plains of Champagne; I saw him reduced to a brigade at Fontainebleau; I saw him a burlesque of empire at Elba; and I saw him an exile on board a British ship, departing from Europe to obscurity and his grave.

Those things may well reconcile inferior talents to their obscurity. But they should also teach nations, that the love of conquest is national ruin; and that there is a power which avenges the innocent blood. No country on earth requires that high moral more than France; and no country on earth has more bitterly suffered for its perversion. Napoleon was embodied France; the concentrated spirit of her wild ambition, of her furious love of conquest, of

her reckless scorn of the sufferings and the rights of mankind. Nobler principles have followed, under a wiser rule. But if France draws the sword again in the spirit of Napoleon, she will exhibit to the world only the fate of Napoleon.—It will be her last war.

On my arrival in England, I found the public mind clouded with almost universal dejection.—Pitt was visibly dying. He still held the nominal reins of government, but the blow had been struck, and his sole honour was now to be, that, like the Spartan of old, he died on the field, and with his buckler on his arm. There are secrets in the distribution of human destinies, which have always perplexed mankind; and one of those is, why so many of the most powerful minds have been cut off in the midst of their career, and lost to mankind, at the moment when their fine faculties were hourly more essential to the welfare of government, of public principle, and of the general progress of society.

I may well comprehend that feeling, for it was my own.—I saw Pitt laid in his grave; I looked down into the narrow bed, where slept all that was mortal of the man who virtually wielded the whole supremacy of Europe. Yet how little can man estimate the future! Napoleon was in his glory, when Pitt was in his shroud. Yet, how infinitely more honoured, and more happy, was the fate of him by whose sepulchre all that was noble and memorable in the living generation stood in reverence and sorrow; than the last hour of the prisoner of St. Helena!

Both were emblems of their nations. The English-

man, manly, pure, and bold, of unshaken firmness, of proud reliance on the resources of his own nature, and of lofty perseverance through good and through evil fortune. The foreigner, dazzling and daring, of singular intellectual vividness, and of a thirst of power which disdained to be slaked, but at sources above the ambition of all the past warriors and statesmen of Europe.—Napoleon was the first who dreamed of fabricating anew the old Roman sceptre, and establishing an empire of the world. His game was for a prodigious stake, and, for awhile, he played it with prodigious fortune. He found the moral atmosphere filled with the floating elements of revolution; he collected the republican electricity, and discharged it on the cusps and pinnacles of the European thrones, with terrible effect. But, from the moment, when he ceased to be the man of the Revolution, he lost the secret of his irresistible strength. As the head of the great republic, making opinion his precursor, calling on the old wrongs of nations to level his way; and marshalling alike the new-born hopes and the ancient injuries of the continental kingdoms, to fight his battles; the world lay before him, with all its barriers ready to fall at the first tread of his horse's hoof. As Emperor, he forged his own chain.

Napoleon, the chieftain of republicanism, might have revolutionized Europe; Napoleon, the monarch, narrowed his supremacy to the sweep of his sword. Like a necromancer weary of his art; he, in the very act of preparing to return to the old habits and ways of mankind, scattered the whole of his magnificent

illusions into "thin air;" flung away his creative wand, for a sceptre; and buried the book of his magic "ten thousand fathom deep," to replace it only by the obsolete statutes of humbled courts, and the weak etiquette of governments in decay. Fortunate for mankind that he committed this irrecoverable error, and was content to be the lord of France, instead of being the sovereign of opinion; for his nature was despotic, and his power must have finally shaped and massed itself into the most stupendous tyranny. Still, he might have long influenced the fates, and long excited the awe of Europe. There were imaginative and capricious minds enough among ourselves to have made his triumph perilous. We, too, might have worshipped his Star, and have forgotten the danger of the flaming phenomenon, in the rapidity and eccentricity of a course, which we saw eclipsing the old luminaries in succession; until it touched our orbit, and visited us in conflagration.

It was said, that Pitt died of a broken heart, in despair of the prospects of England. The defeat of Austerlitz was pronounced his death-blow. What thoughts may cluster round the sleepless pillow, who shall tell? But no man knew England better; none had a bolder faith in her perseverance; none a stronger reliance on her principle; none had more broadly laid the foundations of victory in national honour. I shall never be driven into the belief that William Pitt despaired of his country.

He died in the vigour of his genius, in the proudest struggle of the empire, in the midst of the deepest

trial, which, for a thousand years, had demanded all the faculties of England. Yet, what man within human recollection had lived so long, if we are to reckon life not by the calendar, but by triumphs? What minister of England, or what minister of Europe, but himself, was the head of a European government for three-and-twenty years? What man had attained so high a European rank? What mind had influenced so large an extent of European interests? What name was so instinctively pronounced by every nation, as the first among mankind?—To have earned distinctions like those, was to have obtained all that time could give. Not half a century in years, Pitt's true age was patriarchal.

I was now but a spectator. My connexion with public life was broken off. Every name with which I had been associated was swept away; and I stood like a man flung from shipwreck upon a shore, where every face which he met was that of a stranger. I was still in Parliament, but I felt a loathing for public exertions. From habit, I had almost identified office with the memorable men whom I had seen governing so long; and the new faces, the new declamation, and the new principles, which the ministerial change brought before me nightly, startled my feelings even less as new than as incongruous.

I admitted the ability, the occasional intelligence, and perhaps even the patriotism of the cabinet; but in those reveries, (the natural refuge from a long debate,) memory so often peopled the Treasury Bench with the forms of Pitt and his distinguished coadjutors.

tors, and so completely filled my ear with his sonorous periods and high-toned principles, that when I was roused to the reality, I felt as those who have seen some great performer in one of Shakspeare's characters, until no excellence of his successor can embody the conception once more.

I now retired from the tumult of London, and returned to tastes which I had never wholly forgotten; taking a small residence within a few miles of this centre of the living world, and devoting my leisure to the enjoyments of that life, which, in the purest days of man, was given to him as the happiest, "to dress the garden, and keep it." Clotilde in all her tastes joined with mine, or rather led them, with the instinctive elegance of a female mind, accomplished in every grace of education. We read, wrote, walked, talked, and pruned our rose-trees, and gathered our carnations and violets together.

She had already given me those pledges, which, while they increase the anxiety, also increase the affection of wedded life. The education of our children was a new source of interest. They were handsome and healthy. Their little sports, the growth of their young perceptions, and the freshness of their ideas, renewed to us both all the delights of society without their exhaustion. And often, when, after a day spent in the smoke and bustle of the great City, I reached my rustic gate, heard the cheerful voices of the little population which rushed down the avenue to cling upon my neck; and stood at the door of my cottage, with my arm round the waist of my beautiful

and fond wife, breathing the evening fragrance of a thousand blooms, and enjoying the cool air, and the purple glories of the sky—I often wondered, why men should seek for happiness in any other scene; and felt gratitude, not the less sincere for its being calm and solemn, to the Giver of a lot so nearly approaching to human fulness of joy.

But the world rolls on, let who will slumber among its roses. The political world was awoke by a thunder-clap. Fox died. He was just six months a minister! Such is ambition, such is the world. He died, like Pitt, in the zenith of his powers, with his judgment improved and his passions mitigated, with the noblest prospects of public utility before his eyes, and the majestic responsibilities of a British minister assuming their natural rank in his capacious mind. The times, too, were darkening; and another “lode-star” was thus stricken from the national hemisphere, at the moment when the nation most wanted guidance. The lights which remained were many; but they were vague, feeble, and scattered. The “leader of the starry host” was gone.

I cannot trust myself to speak of this distinguished man; for I was no Foxite. I regarded his policy in opposition, as the pleadings of a powerful advocate, with a vast retaining fee, a comprehensive cause, and a generous and confiding client. Popularity, popular claims, and the people, were all three made for him beyond all other men; and no advocate ever pleaded with more indefatigable zeal, or more resolute determination. But, raised to a higher position, higher

qualities were demanded. Whether they might not have existed in his nature, waiting for the development of time, is the question. But time was not given. His task had hitherto been easy. It was simply, to stand a spectator on the shore, criticising the manœuvres of a stately vessel struggling with the gale. The helm was at last put into his hand and it was then that he felt the difference between *terra firma*, and the wild and restless element which he was now to control. But, he had scarcely set his foot on the deck, when he, too, was swept away. On such brevity of trial, it is impossible to judge. Time might have matured his vigour, while it expanded his views; matchless as the casual leader of a party, he might then have been elevated into the acknowledged leader of a people. The singular daring, ardent sensitiveness, and popular ambition, which made him dangerous in a private station, might then have found their nobler employment, and been purified as he rose into the broad and lofty region of ministerial duty. He might have enlarged the partizan into the patriot, and, instead of being the great tempter of a populace, have been ennobled into the illustrious guide of an empire.

CHAPTER XLIII.

“ Mourn genius high, and love profound,
And wit, that loved to play, not wound ;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine.
And if thou mourn'st, they could not save
From error, him who owns this grave.
Be every harsher thought supprest,
And sacred be his last, long rest,
And partial cast aside,
Record, that Fox a Briton died.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

BUT the world never stands still. On the day when I returned from moralising on the vanity of life over the grave of Fox, I received a letter, a trumpet-call to the *mêlée*, from Mordecai. It was enthusiastic, but its enthusiasm had now taken a bolder direction. “In abandoning England,” he told me, “he had abandoned all minor and personal speculations, and was now dealing with the affairs of kingdoms.” This letter gave only fragments of his views ; but it was easy to see that he contemplated larger results than he ventured to trust to his pen. It was from Poland.

“You must come and see me here,” said he, “for it is only here that you *can* see me, as I ever desired to be seen; or, in fact, as nature made me. In your busy metropolis, I was only one of the millions, who were content to make a sort of a reptile existence, creeping on the ground, and living on the chances of the day. Here I have thrown off my caterpillar life, and am on the wing; a human dragon-fly, if you will; darting at a thousand different objects, enjoying the broad sunshine, and speeding through the wide air. My invincible attachment to my nation here finds its natural object; for the sons of Abraham are here a *people*.—I am here a patriarch, with my flocks and herds, my shepherds and clansmen, the sons of my tribe coming to do me honour, and my heart swelling and glowing with the prospects of national regeneration. I have around me a province, to which one of your English counties would be but a sheepfold; a multitude of bold spirits, to whom your populace would be triflers; a new nation, elated by their approaching deliverance, solemnly indignant at their past oppression, and determined to shake the land to its centre, or to recover their freedom.

“You will speak of this as the vision of an old man—come to us, and you will see it a splendid reality. But observe, that *I* expect no miracle. I leave visions to fanatics; and while I acknowledge the Power of Powers, which rides in clouds, and moves the world by means unknown to human weakness, I look also to the human means which have their place in speeding the wheels of the great system. The

army which has broken down the strength of the Continent—the force which, like a whirlwind, has burst such tremendous chasms through the old domains of European power, and has torn up so many of the forest monarchs by the root—the French army, the greatest instrument of human change since the Gothic invasions, is now marching direct on Poland.

“I have seen the man who is at the head of that army—the most extraordinary being whom Europe has seen for a thousand years—the crowned basilisk of France. I own, that we must beware of his fangs, of the blast of his nostrils, and the flash of his eye. He is a terrible production of nature: but he is on our side; and, even if he should be finally trampled, he will have first done our work.—I have had an interview with Napoleon! it was long and animated. He spoke to me, as to the chief man of my nation, and I answered him in the spirit of the chief man. He acknowledged, that the general change, essential to the true government of Europe, was incapable of being effected, without the aid of our people. He spoke contemptuously of the impolicy by which we had been deprived of our privileges, and declared his determination to place us on a height from which we might move the world. But it was obvious to me, that under those lofty declarations there was a burning ambition; that if we were to move the world, it was for him; and that, even then, we were not to move it for the monarch of France, but for the individual. I saw, that *he*

was then the dreamer. Yet his dream was the extravagance of genius. In those hopeless graspings and wild aspirations, I saw ultimate defeat; but I saw also the nerve and muscle of a gigantic mind. In his pantings after immeasurable power and imperishable dominion, it was plain that he utterly forgot the barrier which time rears before the proudest step of human genius; wholly unconscious, that, within a few years, his head must grow grey, his blood cold, the sword be returned to its sheath, and even the sceptre fall from his nerveless hand. Still, in our conference, we both spoke the same language of scorn for human obstacles, of contempt for the narrowness of human views, and of our resolution to effect objects which, in many an after-age, should fix the eye of the world.—But *he* spoke of mortal things; relying on mortal conjecture and mortal power. I spoke of immortal, and on surer grounds. I felt them to be the consummation of promises which nothing can abolish; the splendid offspring of power which nothing can resist. The foundation of his structures was policy, the foundation of mine was prophecy. And when his shall be scattered, as the chaff of the threshing-floor, and be light as the dust of the balance; mine shall be deep as the centre, high as the heavens, and dazzling as the sun in his glory.”

In another portion of his letter, he adverted to the means, by which this great operation was to be effected.

“I have been for three days on the Vistula, gazing at the march of the ‘Grand Army.’ It well deserves

the name. It is the mightiest mass of power ever combined under one head; half a million of men. The armies of Xerxes were gatherings of clowns, compared to this incomparable display of soldier-ship; the armies of Alaric and Attila were hordes of savages, in comparison; the armies of ancient Rome alone approached it in point of discipline, but the most powerful Roman army never reached a fifth of its number.—I see at this moment before me the conquerors of the Continent, the brigades which have swept Italy, the bayonets and cannon which have broken down Austria, and extinguished Prussia.—The eagles are now on the wing for a mightier prey.”

This prediction was like the prayers of the Homeric heroes—

“One half the gods dispersed in empty air.”

Poland was not to be liberated; the crisis was superb, but the weapon was not equal to the blow. It was the first instance in which the French Emperor was found inferior to his fortune. With incomparable force of intellect, Napoleon wanted grandeur of mind. It has become the custom of later years to deny him even superiority of intellect; but the man who, in a contest open to all, goes before all—who converts a republic, with all its ardour, haughtiness, and passion, into a monarchy at once as rigid and as magnificent as an Oriental despotism—who, in a country of warriors, makes himself the leading warrior—who, among the

circle within circle of the subtlest political intrigues, baffles all intrigues, converts them into the material of his own ascendancy, and makes the subtlest and the boldest spirits his instruments and slaves; has given unanswerable evidence of the superiority of his talents. —The soldier, who beat down in succession all the great military names of Europe; the negotiator who vanquished all existing diplomacy; the statesman who remodelled the laws, curbed the fiery temper, and reduced to discipline the fierce insubordination of a people, flushed with a sense of irresistible victory; last and chief trial of all; the Jacobin, who cast the Republic into the grave, and made its sepulchre the foundation of his throne; must have possessed abilities of the first order.

Or, if those were not the achievements of intellect, by what were they done? If they were done without it, of what value is intellect? Napoleon had thus, only found the still superior secret of success; and we deny his intellect, simply to give him attributes higher than belong to human nature.—No man before him dreamed of such success, no man in his day rivalled it, no man since his day has attempted its renewal. “But he was fortunate!” What can be more childish than to attempt the solution of the problem by fortune? Fortune is a phantom. Circumstances may arise beyond the conception of man; but, where the feebler mind yields to circumstances, the stronger one shapes, controls, and guides them.

The true solution belongs to higher views of the moral government of the globe. This man was sent

for a great purpose of justice, and he was gifted with the faculties for its execution. A tremendous act of imperial guilt had been committed, of which Europe was to be purged by penalty alone. The ruin of Poland was to be made a moral to the governments of the earth; and Napoleon was to be the fiery brand that was to imprint the sentence upon the foreheads of the great criminals. It is in contemplations like those, that the spirit of history ministers to the wisdom of mankind. Whatever may be the retribution for individuals beyond the grave, justice on nations must be done in this world; and *here* it will be done.

The partition of Poland was the most comprehensive and audacious crime of the modern world. It was a deliberate insult, at once to the laws of nations and to the majesty of the great Disposer of nations. And never fell vengeance more immediate, more distinct, or more characteristic.—The capital of Austria twice entered over the bodies of its gallant soldiery; Russia ravaged and Moscow burnt; the Prussian army extinguished by the massacre of Jena, and Prussia, in a day, fettered for years; such were the summary and solemn retributions of Heaven.

But, when the penalty was paid, the fate of the executioner instantly followed. Guilt had punished guilt, and justice was to be done alike upon all. Napoleon and his empire vanished, as the powder vanishes, that explodes the mine.—The ground was broken up; the structures of royalty on its surface were deeply fractured; the havoc was complete;

but the fiery deposit which had effected the havoc was itself scattered into air.

Napoleon's fierce nature was made for execution ; he wanted the greatness of mind, for restoration. The re-establishment of Poland would have been an act of consummate grandeur. It would have established a new character for the whole Revolution. It would have shown, that the new spirit which had gone forth summoning the world to regeneration, was itself regeneration ; that all conquest was not selfish, and all protestation not meant to deceive. If Napoleon had given Poland a diadem, and placed it on the brow of Kosciusko ; he would, in that act, have placed on his own brow a still richer diadem ; which no chance of the field could have plucked away ; a dazzling answer to all the calumnies of his age, and all the doubts of posterity. He might even have built, in the restoration of the fallen kingdom, a citadel for his own security, in all the casualties of empire ; but, in all events, he would have fixed in the political heaven a star which, to the last recollection of mankind, would have thrown light on his sepulchre, and borne his name.

The fall of the Foxite ministry opened the way to a new cabinet, and I resumed my office. But we marched in over ruins. Europe had been shattered. England had stood aloof and escaped the shock ; but, to stand aloof then was her crime ; her sympathy might have saved the tottering system. Now, all was gone. When we looked over the whole level of

the Continent, we saw but two thrones, France and Russia; all the rest were crushed. England was without an ally. We had begun the war, with Europe in our line of battle; we now stood alone. Yet, the spirit of the nation was never bolder than in this hour, when a storm of hostility seemed to be gathering round us from every quarter of the world. Still, there were voices of ill omen. It was said, that France and Russia had resolved to divide the world between them; to monopolize the East, and the West; to extinguish all the minor sovereignties; to abolish all the constitutions; to turn the world into two vast menageries, in which the lesser monarchies should be shown, like caged lions, for the pomp of the two lords-paramount of the globe. I heard this language from philosophers, orators, and even from statesmen; but I turned to the people, and I found the spirit of their forefathers unshaken in them still—the bold defiance of the foreigner, the national scorn of his gasconading, the desire to grapple with his utmost strength, and the willingness, nay, the passionate desire, to rest the cause of Europe on their championship alone. I never heard among the multitude a sound of despair. They had answered the call to arms with national ardour. The land was filled with voluntary levies, and the constant cry of the people was—conflict with the enemy, any where, at any time, or upon any terms. More fully versed in their national history than any other European people, they remembered, that in every war with France, for a thousand years, England

had finished with victory. They saw that she had never suffered any one decisive defeat in the war; that wherever the forces of the two nations could come fairly into contact, their troops had always been successful; and that from the moment when France ventured to contest the empire of the seas, all the battles of England were triumphs, until the enemy was swept from the ocean.

The new cabinet founded its plans on the national confidence, and executed them with statesmanlike decision. The struggle on the Continent was at an end; but they resolved to gird it with a chain of fire. Every port was shut up by English guns; every shore was watched by English eyes. Outside this chain, the world was our own; the ocean was free; every sea was traversed by our commerce, with as much security, as in the most profound peace. The contrast with the Continent was of the most striking order. There all was the dungeon—one vast scene of suffering and outcry; of coercion and sorrow; the conscription, the confiscation, the licensed plunder, the bitter and perpetual insult. The hearts of men died within them, and they crept silently to their obscure graves. Wounds, poverty, and ferocious tyranny, the heart-gnawing pangs of shame, and the thousand thorns which national and conscious degradation strews on the pillow of men crushed by the insolence of a soldiery, wore away the human race; provinces were unpeopled, and a generation were laid prematurely in the grave.

The recollections of the living world will long

point to this period as the most menacing portion of all history. The ancient tyrannies were bold, presumptuous, and remorseless, monopolies of power; but their pressure scarcely descended to the multitude. It crushed the senator, the patrician, and the man of opulence; as the tempest smites the turrets of the palace, or shatters the pinnacles of the mountain range. But the despotism of France searched the humblest condition of man. It tyrannized over the cottage, as fiercely as it had trampled on the thrones. The German or Italian peasant saw his son torn away, to perish in some distant region, of which he knew no more, than that it was the grave of the thousands and ten thousands of his fellow shepherds and vintagers. The despotism of France less resembled the domination of man, from which, with all its vigilance, there is some hope of escape; than the subtlety of a demon, which has an evil and a sting for every heart, and by which nothing can be forgotten, and nothing will be spared. In the whole immense circle of French dominion, no man could lay his head down to rest, with a security that he might not be roused at midnight, to be flung into a captivity from which he was never to return. No man could look upon his property, the earnings of his manhood, the resource for his age, or the provision for his children, without the knowledge, that it was at the mercy of the military plunderer. No man could look upon the birth of his child, without the bitter consciousness, that another victim was preparing for the general sacrifice; nor could see the

ripening form or intellect of those who were given to him by Providence for the comfort and companionship of his advancing years, without a conviction that they would be swept away from him. The father felt that he would be left unsheltered and alone ; and that those in whom his life was wrapt, and whom he would have gladly given his life to save, were destined to perish by some German or Russian bayonet, and make their last bed among the swamps of the Danube, or the snows of Poland.

I am not now speaking from the natural abhorrence of the Briton for tyranny, alone. The proofs are before the eye of mankind. Within little more than half the first year of the Polish campaign, three conscriptions, of eighty thousand youths each, were demanded from France alone. Two hundred and forty thousand children were torn from their parents, and sent to perish in the field, the hospital, or on the march through deserts where winter reigns in boundless supremacy !

Let the man of England rejoice, that those terrible inflictions cannot be laid on him ; and be grateful to the freedom which protects this most favoured nation of mankind. Arbitrary arrest, and the conscription, are the two heads of the serpent—either would embitter the existence of the most prosperous state of society ; they both at this hour gnaw the vitals of the continental states ; they alienate the allegiance, and chill the affections ; even where they are mitigated by the character of the sovereigns, they still remain the especial evils which the noblest patriotism should

apply all its efforts to extinguish, and the removal of which it would be the most illustrious boon of princes to confer upon their people.

But the ramparts of the supreme empire of slavery and suffering were to be shaken at last. The breach was to be made, and stormed by England; Europe was to be summoned to follow, and achieve its own deliverance; and England was to move at the head of the proudest armament that ever marched to conquest, for the liberties of mankind.

She began by a thunder-clap. The peace with Russia had laid the Czar at the mercy of France. Napoleon had intrigued to make him a confederate in the league against mankind. But the generous nature of the Russian monarch shrank from the conspiracy; and the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit were divulged to the British cabinet. I shall not now say from what authority they came; but the confidence was spontaneous, and the effect decisive. Those Articles contained the outline of a plan for combining all the fleets of the Continent, and pouring final vengeance on our shores. The right wing of that tremendous armament was to be formed of the Danish and Russian fleets.

This confederacy must be broken up, or we must see a hundred and eighty ships of the line, freighted with a French and Russian army, at the mouth of the Thames. There was not a moment to be lost, if we were to act at all; for a French force was already within a march of the Great Belt, to garrison Denmark. The question was debated in council, in all

its bearings. All were fully aware of the clamour which would be raised by the men who were lending themselves to every atrocity of France. We were not less prepared for the furious declamation of that professor of universal justice, and protector of the rights of neutral nations; the French Emperor. But the necessity was irresistible; the act was one of self-defence; and it was executed accordingly, and with instant and incomparable vigour. A fleet and army were despatched to the Baltic. An assault of three days gave the Danish fleet into our hands. The confederacy was broken up, and the armament returned, with twenty sail of the enemy's line, as trophies of the best planned and boldest expedition of the war.

Napoleon raged; but it was, at finding that England could show a promptitude like his own, sanctioned by a better cause. Denmark complained pathetically of the infringement of peace, before she had "completed her preparations for war;" but every man of political understanding, even in Denmark, rejoiced at her being disburdened of a fleet, whose subsistence impoverished her revenues, and whose employment could only have involved her in fatal hostilities with Britain. Russia was loudest in her indignation, but a smile was mingled with her frown. Her statesmen were secretly rejoiced, to be relieved from all share in the fearful enterprise of an encounter with the fleets of England; and her Emperor was not less rejoiced to find, that she had still the sagacity and the courage which could as little be baffled as subdued; and to which the powers of the

North themselves might look for refuge in the next struggle of diadems.

This was but the dawning of the day; the sun was soon to rise. Yet, public life has its difficulties in proportion to its height. As Walpole said, that "no man knows the human heart but a minister;" so no man knows the real difficulties of office, but the man of office. Lures to his passions, temptations to his integrity, and alarms to his fears, are perpetually acting on his sense of honour. To make a false step is the most natural thing in the world under all those impulses; and one false step ruins him. The rumour reached me that there were dissensions in the cabinet; and, though all was smooth to the eye, I had soon sufficient proof that the intelligence was true. A prominent member of the administration was the object of the rumour. He was an intelligent, high-spirited, and straightforward man, open in language, if the language was not of the most classic order; and bold in his conceptions, if those conceptions were not formed on the most studied knowledge. He had attained his high position, partly by public services, partly by connexion. It was impossible to refuse respect to his general powers, but it was equally impossible to deny the intellectual distinctions of his competitor. The contrast which they presented in the House was decisive of their talents for debate. While the one spoke his mind with the uncultured but forcible expressions of the moment; the other never addressed the House but with the polished and pointed diction of the orator.

This man was the most accomplished of debaters, always prepared, always pungent, often powerful. Distinguished in early life for scholarship, he had brought all the finer spirit of his studies into the business of government. He was the delight of the House; and the boundless applause which followed his eloquence, and paid an involuntary tribute to his mastery of public affairs, not unnaturally stimulated his ambition to possess that leading official rank, to which he seemed called by the right of nature. The rivalry at length became open and declared; it had been felt too deeply to die away among the casual impressions of public life; it had been suppressed too long, to be forgiven on either side; and the crisis was evidently approaching, in which it was necessary to take a part with either of those gifted men.

I seldom spent more anxious hours, in the course of an anxious life, than during the period of this deliberation. I felt all the fascinations of the man of genius. On the other hand, I respected all the solid and manly qualities of his opponent. In a personal view, the issue of the contest was likely to produce evil to my own views. I was still a dependent upon fortune. I had new ties and interests, which made official income more important to me day by day. In the fall of the administration I must follow the general fate.—In making my decision with the unsuccessful candidate for power, I must go down along with him; and the claims of the competitors were so equally balanced, and both were so distinguished, that it was beyond all conjecture, to calculate the result.

I, too, was not without many a temptation, to perplex my judgment. The rivalry had at length become public, and the friends of each were active in securing opinions among the holders of office. The whole was a lottery, but, with my political existence dependent on my escaping a blank. In this dilemma I consulted my oracle, Clotilde. Her quick intelligence decided for me at once. "You must resign," said she. "You value both; you cannot side with either, without offending their feelings, or, what I more regard, distressing your own. Both are men of intelligence and honour, and they will understand your motives, and respect them.—To retain office is impossible."

"But, Clotilde, how can I bear the thought of reducing you and my infants to the discomforts of a narrow income, and the obscurity of a life of retirement?"

"A thousand times better, than you could endure the thought of retaining office against your judgment, or taking a part against a friend. Follow the impressions of your own generous nature, and you will be dearer than ever to Clotilde—even though it condemned us all to the deepest obscurity." In her heart she was evidently less of the heroine than in her language: the children had come playing round her feet at the moment; and the family picture of the reverse in our fortunes, filled with this cluster of young faces, unconscious of the chance which lay before them, was too severe a trial for a mother's feelings. The beating of her heart showed the pain of her sacrifice. But she still persisted in her determination. As I

took leave of her to go down to the House, her last words, as she pressed my hand, were—"Resign, and leave the rest to fortune."

A motion, obviously referring to the rival claims, had been appointed for the evening; and the premier was to open the debate. The House was crowded at an early hour; and as my services were required in the discussion, I postponed the communication of my resolve, until the division should announce that my labours were at an end.—But the hour passed away in routine business. Still, the premier did not appear. The anxiety grew excessive. At length, whispers ran round the benches, of a rencounter between the two distinguished individuals; and, like all rumours of this nature, the results were pronounced to be of the most alarming kind. Then came the announcement, that one of the combatants remained unhurt, but that the other had received a mortal wound. The House was speedily deserted; and all rushed out, to ascertain the truth of this melancholy intelligence. Yet, nothing certain was to be gathered among the numberless reports of the night, and I returned home harassed almost into fever. The morning quieted the general alarm. The wound was dangerous, but not mortal; and both combatants had sent in their resignation. It was accepted by royalty; and before another night fell, I was sent for by the premier, and offered one of the vacant offices.

Such are the chances of public life. The lottery had been drawn, and mine was a prize. With what

feelings I returned on that night to my fireside ; with what welcome I was received by my gentle, yet heroic, wife ; or with what eyes I glanced upon my infants, as they came to ask the paternal kiss and blessing before they parted for their pillows, I leave to those, who know the rejoicing of the heart, to conceive.

CHAPTER XLIV.

“ Nor think I bear a coward soul,
Which every danger can controul ;
Since all the common path must tread,
That leads the mortal to the dead.
Say, why should man’s inglorious age,
Creep over youth’s inactive bloom ?
Till life deserts our busy stage,
To lie inglorious in the tomb,
This strife be mine ; and Thou whose might
Can bless the issue of the fight,
Oh ! grant me thy propitious aid.”

PINDAR.
The first Olympic.

THOSE events had shaken the ministry, as dissensions always have done ; and it still cost us many a severe struggle, to resist the force of Opposition combined with the clamours of the country. England and France now presented a spectacle unexampled in the annals of hostilities ;—engaged in a war which seemed interminable, both determined to conquer or perish ; both impelled by the most daring courage ; yet neither able to inflict the slightest blow upon the other, with but fifteen miles between. France was nearer to Russia, nay, was nearer to the

remotest extremity of Asia, than to England. In the midst of the fiercest war, both preserved the attitude of the most profound peace. The lion and the tiger, couching on the opposite sides of some impassable ravine, each watching the fiery eyes and naked fangs of the other, would have been the natural emblems of this hopeless thirst of encounter between the two most powerful and exasperated nations on the earth.

It is no superstition to trace those events to a higher source than man. The conclusion of this vast conflict was already written, in a record above the short-sighted vision and infirm memory of our nature. For the last five hundred years of European annals, France has been the allotted punisher of the Continent; and England the allotted punisher of France. I make no presumptuous attempt to explain the reason; but the process is incontestable.

When private profligacy combines with some atrocious act of public guilt, to make the crimes of the Continent intolerable; France is sent forth, to carry fire and sword into its boundaries, to crush its armies in the field, to sack its cities, and to decimate its population.—Then comes the penalty of the punisher. The crimes of France herself demand purgation. The strength of England is summoned to this stern duty, and France is scourged; her military pride is broken; her power is paralyzed; peace follows, and Europe rests for a generation. The process has been so often renewed, and has been completed with such irresistible regularity, that

the principle is a law. The period for this consummation was now come once more.

I was sitting in my library one evening, when a stranger was introduced, who had brought a letter from the officer commanding our squadron on the Spanish coast. He was a man of noble presence, of stately stature, and with a countenance exhibiting all the vivid expression of the South. He was a Spanish nobleman from the Asturias, and deputed by the authorities to demand succours in the national rising against the common enemy, Napoleon.

I was struck with the measureless value of resistance in a country which opened to us the whole flank of France; but the intelligence was so wholly unexpected, so entirely beyond calculation, and at the same time so pregnant with the highest results to England, that I was long incredulous.—I was prepared to doubt the involuntary exaggeration of men who had everything at stake; the feverish tone of minds embarked in the most formidable of all struggles; and even the passion of the southern in every event and object, of force sufficient to arouse him into action. But the Asturian was firm in his assurances, clear and consistent in his views, and there was even a candour in his confession of the unprepared state of his country, which added largely to my confidence. Our dialogue was, I believe, unprecedented for the plainness of its enquiries and replies. It was perfectly Lacedæmonian.

“What regular force can Spain bring into the field?”

"None."

"What force has Napoleon in Spain at this moment?"

"At least two hundred and fifty thousand men, and those in the highest state of equipment and discipline."

"And yet you venture to resist?"

"We have resisted, we shall resist, and we shall beat them."

"In what state are your fortresses?"

"One half of them in the hands of the French, and the other half, without garrisons, provisions, or even guns; still, we shall beat them."

"Are not the French troops in possession of all the provinces?"

"Yes."

"Are they not in fact masters of the country?"

"No."

"How am I to reconcile those statements?"

"The French are masters by day; the Spaniards are masters by night."

"But you have none of the elements of national government. You have lost your king."

"So much the better."

"Your princes, nobles, and court."

"So much the better."

"Even your prime minister and whole administration are in the hands of the enemy."

"Best of all!" said the respondent, with a frown like a thunder-cloud.

"What resource, then, have you?"

“The people!” exclaimed the Spaniard, in a tone of superb defiance.

“Still—powerful as a united people are—before you can call upon a British government to embark in such a contest, it must be shown that the people are capable of acting together; that they are not separated by the jealousies which proverbially divide your country.”

“Señor Inglese,” said the Don, with a Cervantic curl of the lip, “I see, that Spain has not been neglected among the studies of your high station. But Spain is *not* to be studied in books. She is not to be sketched, like a fragment of a Moorish castle, and carried off in a portfolio. Europe knows nothing of her. You must pass the Pyrenees, to conceive her existence. She lives on principles totally distinct from those of all other nations; and France will shortly find, that she never made a greater mistake than when she thought, that even the southern slope of the Pyrenees was like the northern.”

“But,” said I, “the disunion of your provinces, the extinction of your army, and the capture of your executive government, must leave the country naked to invasion. The contest may be gallant, but the hazard must be formidable. To sustain a war against the disciplined troops of France, and the daring determination of its ruler, would require a new age of miracle.” The Spaniard bit his lip, and was silent. “At all events, your proposals do honour to the spirit of your country, and I shall not be the man to throw obstacles in your way. Draw up a

memoir; state your means, your objects, and your intentions, distinctly; and I shall lay it before the government without delay."

"Señor Inglese, it shall be done.—In that memoir, I shall simply say, that Spain has six ranges of mountains, all impregnable, and that the Spanish people are resolved to defend them; that the country is one vast natural fortress; that the Spanish soldier can sleep on the sand, can live on the simplest food, and the smallest quantity of that food; that he can march fifty miles a-day; that he is of the same blood with the conquerors of the Moors, and with the soldiers of Charles V.; and that he requires only discipline and leaders to equal the glory of his forefathers." His fine features glanced with manly exultation.

"Still, before we can bring your case before the country, we must be enabled to have an answer for the objections of the legislature.—Your provinces are scarcely less hostile to each other than they are to the enemy. What plan can unite them in one system of defence? and, without that union, how can resistance be effectual?"

"Spain stands alone," was the reply. "Her manners, her feelings, and her people, have no examples in Europe. Her war will have as little similarity to the wars of its governments.—It will be a war, not of armies, but of the shepherd, of the artificer, the muleteer, the contrabandist; a war of all classes, the peasant, the priest, the noble, nay, the beggar on the highway. But this was the war of her ancestors, the war of the Asturias, which cleared

the country of the Moors, and will clear it of the French. With all Spain a mass of hostility, a living tide of unquenchable hatred and consuming fire; the French battalions, pouring over the Pyrenees, will be like battalions poured into the ocean. They will be engulfed; they will never return.—Our provinces are divided, but they have one invincible bond, abhorrence of the French. Even their division is not infirmity, but strength. They know so little of each other, that even the conquest of one half of Spain would be scarcely felt by the rest. This will be a supreme advantage in the species of war which we contemplate—a war of desultory but perpetual assaults, of hostilities that cease neither night nor day, of campaigns that know no distinction between summer and winter—a war in which no pitched battles will be fought, but in which every wall will be a rampart, every hollow of the hills a camp, every mountain a citadel, every roadside, and swamp, and rivulet, the place of an ambuscade. We shall have no battalions and brigades, we require no tactics; our sole science will be, to destroy the enemy wherever he can be reached by bullet or knife; until we make Spain the tomb of invasion, and her very name an omen, and a ruin, to the tyrant on the French throne.”

The councils of England in this crisis were worthy of her ancient name. It was resolved, to forget the long injuries of which Spain had been the instrument, during her passive submission to the arrogance of her ally and master. The Spanish Bourbons were now gone; the nation was disencumbered

of that government of chamberlains, maids of honour, and duennas. It was to be no longer stifled in the perfumed atmosphere of court boudoirs, or to be chilled in the damps of the cloister. Its natural and noble proportions were to be left unfettered and undisguised by the formal fashions of past centuries of grave frivolity and decorous degradation. The giant was to rise refreshed. The Samson was to resume his primal purpose; he was no longer to sleep in the lap of his Delilah; the national fame was before him, and, breaking his manacles at one bold effort, he was thenceforth to stand, as nature had moulded him, powerful and prominent among mankind.

Those were the dreams of England; but they were high-toned and healthy dreams—the anticipations of a great country, accustomed to the possession of freedom, and expecting to plant national regeneration, wherever it set foot upon the soil. The cause of Spain was universally adopted by the people, and was welcomed by Parliament with acclamation; the appointment of a minister to represent the cabinet in Spain was decided on, and this distinguished commission was pressed upon my personal sense of duty by the premier. My official rank placed me above ambassadorships, but a service of this order had a superior purpose. It was a mission of the country, not of the minister. I was to be the instrument of an imperial declaration of good-will, interest, and alliance, to a whole people.

Within another week, the frigate which conveyed

me was flying before the breeze, along the iron-bound shore of Galicia; the brightest and most burning of skies was over my head, the most billowy of seas was dashing and foaming round me, and my eye was in continual admiration of the noble mountain barriers which, in a thousand shapes, guard the western coast of Spain from the ocean. At length the bay of Corunna opened before us; our anchor dropped, and I made my first step on the most picturesque shore, and among the most original people, of Europe.

My destination was Madrid; but it was essential, that I should ascertain all the facts in my power from the various provincial governments as I passed along. And I thus obtained a more ample knowledge of the people than could have fallen to the lot of the ordinary traveller. I consulted with their juntas, I was present at their festivals, I rode with their hidalgos, and I marched with their troops.

One of the peculiarities which, as an Englishman, has always interested me in foreign travel is, that it brings us back to a period different from the existing age at home. All descending from a common stock, every nation of Europe has made a certain advance; but the advance has been of different degrees. Five hundred years ago, they were all nearly alike. In the Netherlands, I continually felt myself carried back to the days of the Protectorate; I saw nearly the same costume, the same formality of address, and the same habits of domestic life. In Germany, I went back a century further, and saw the English

primitive style of existence, the same stiff architecture, the same mingling of stateliness and simplicity, not forgetting the same homage to the "divine right of kings." In Spain, I found myself in the thirteenth century, and but for the language, the heat, and the brown visages around me, could have imagined myself in England, in the days when "barons bold" still exercised the rights of feudalism, when gallant archers killed the king's deer without the king's permission, and when the priest was the lawgiver of the land.

Day by day, I saw the pilgrim making his weary way from shrine to shrine; the landowner caracoling his handsome horse over wild heaths and half-made highways; that horse caparisoned with as many fantastic trappings as the charger of chivalry, and both horse and rider forming no feeble representation of the knight bound on adventure.—I saw the monastery of our old times, exhibiting all its ancient solidity, sternness, and pomp; with its hundred brethren; its crowd of sallow, silent domestics; its solemn service; and even with its beggars crowding and quarrelling for their daily dole at its gate. The face of the country seemed to have been unchanged since the first invasion of the Visigoths:—immense commons, grown barren from the absence of all cultivation; vast, dreary sheep-walks; villages, few, rude, and thinly peopled; the absence of all enclosures, and a general look of loneliness, which, however, I could have scarcely imagined in England, at any period since the Heptarchy.

Yet, those wild wastes were often interspersed with delicious spots; where, after toiling half the day over a desert as wild as Arabia, the traveller suddenly stood on the brink of some sweet and secluded valley, in whose depths the eye rested on almost tropical luxuriance—all the shrubs and blossoms which require so much shelter in our rougher climate, flourishing in the open air; thickets of myrtle and jessamine; huge olives, and primeval vines, spreading, in all the prodigality of nature, over the rocks; parasite plants clothing the oaks and elms with drapery of all colours, floating in every breath of wind; and, most delicious of all, in the fiery centre of Spain, streams, cool as ice and clear as crystal, gushing and glancing away through the recesses of the valley; sometimes glittering in the sun, then plunging into shade; then winding along, seen by starts, like silver snakes, until they were lost under sheets of copse and foliage, unpruned by the hand of man, and which seemed penetrable only by the bird or the hare.

As my mission was but temporary, and might be attended with personal hazard, I had left Clotilde in England, much to her regret; and travelled with as small a retinue as possible; in general by unfrequented ways, to avoid the French patroles, which were already spread through the neighbourhood of the high roads. But, at Burgos, the Spanish commandant, on the delivery of my passport, insisted so strongly on the necessity for an escort; placing the wish on a feeling of his personal responsibility, in

case of my falling into the enemy's hands; that, to save the señor's conscience, or his commission, I consented to take a few troopers, with one of his aides-de-camp, to see me in safety through the Sierra Morena.

The aide-de-camp was a *character*; a little, meagre being, who, after a long life of idleness and half-pay, was suddenly called into service, and now figured in a staff-coat and feather. His first commission had been in the luckless expedition of Count O'Reilly against the Moors; and it had probably served him as a topic, from that time to the moment, when he pledged his renown for my safe delivery into the hands of the junta of Castile. He had three leading ideas, which formed the elements of his body and soul—his exploits in the Moorish campaign; his contempt for the monks; and his value for the talents, courage, and fame of Don Ignacio Trueno Relampago, the illustrious appellative of the little aide-de-camp himself.

He talked without mercy, as we rode along; and gave his opinions with all the easy conviction of an "officer on the staff," and all the freedom of the wilderness. The expedition to Africa had failed solely for want of adopting "the tactics which *he* would have advised;" and his public services in securing the retreat would have done honour to the Cid, or to Alexander the Great, had not "military jealousy refused to transmit them to the national ear." His opinion of Spanish politics was; that they owed their occasional mistakes solely to the culpable

negligence of the war-minister "in overlooking the gallant subalterns of the national army." Spain he regarded as the natural sovereign of Europe; and, of course, of all mankind—its falling occasionally into the background being satisfactorily accounted for, by the French descent of her existing dynasty, by the visible deterioration in the royal manufacture of cigars, and, more than either, "by the tardiness of military promotion." This last grievance was the sting.

"If justice had been done," exclaimed the new-feathered warrior, rising in his stirrups, and waving his hand, as if he was in the act of cleaving down a Moor, "*I* should long since have been a general. If I had been a general, the armies of Spain would long since have been on a very different footing. Men of merit would have been placed in their proper positions; the troops would have emulated the exploits of their ancestors in the age of Ferdinand and Isabella; and, instead of receiving a king from France, we should have given her one; while, instead of the French emperor carrying off our princes, as the hawk carries off pigeons, or as a gipsy picks your pocket under pretence of telling your fortune, we should have been garrisoning Paris with our battalions, and giving a viceroy to the 'Tuileries.'"

I laughed; but my ill-timed mirth had nearly cost me an "affair of honour" with the little regenerator. His hand was instantly on the hilt of his sword, and every wrinkle on his brown visage was swelling into wrath; when my better genius prevailed. He pro-

bably recollected that he was sent as my protector, and that the office would not have been fulfilled according to his instructions, by running me through the midriff. But, with all his pomposity, he had the national good nature; and when we sat down to our chicken and bottle of Tinto, in one of those soft and sheltered valleys, he was full of remorse for his burst of patriotic temper.

The day had been a continued blaze of sunshine, the road a burning sand, and the contrast of the spot where we made our halt was tempting. The scene was rich and *riant*, the evening lovely, and the wine good. I could have reposed there for a month, or a year, or for ever. It would have been enough to make a man turn hermit; and I instinctively gazed round, to look for the convent which "must lie" in so luxurious a site. My companion informed me that I was perfectly right in my conjecture, that spot having been the position of one of the richest brotherhoods of Spain. But its opulence had been unluckily displayed in rather too ostentatious a style in the eyes of a French brigade; who, in consequence, packed up the plate in their baggage, and, in the course of a tumult which followed with the peasantry, burned the building to the ground.

Yet, this misfortune was the source of but slight condolence on the part of my friend. He was perfectly of the new school. "They were Theatines," said he—"as bad as the Jesuits, in every thing but hypocrisy—powerful, insolent, bold-faced knaves;

and after their robbing me of the inheritance of my old rich uncle, which one of those crafty *padres* contrived to make the old devotee give them on his death-bed, I had dry eyes for their ill luck. But, I suppose," added he, "you know their creed?" I acknowledged my ignorance. "Well, you shall hear it. It is incomparably true; though, whether written for them by Moratin or Calderon, I leave to the antiquarians." He then chanted it in the style of the monkish service, and with gesticulations, groans, and upturning of eyes; which strongly gave me the idea that he had employed his leisure, if not relieved his sense of the war-minister's neglect, by exerting his talents as the "Gracioso" of some strolling company. The troopers gathered round us, with that odd mixture of familiarity and respect which belongs to all the lower ranks of Spain; and the performer evidently acquired new spirits from the laughter of his audience, as he dashingly sang his burlesque:—

CANCION.

Los mandamientos de los Teatinos *,
Mas humanos son que divinos.

Coro.—Tra lara, tra lara.

Primo—Adquirir mucho dinero. Tra lara, &c.

Segundo—Sujetar todo el mundo. Tra lara, &c.

* CHANT.

The Theatines' commandments ten
Have less to do with saints than men.

Chorus.—Tra lara, tra lara.

1—Of money make sure. Tra lara, &c.

2—Entrap rich and poor.

Tercero—Buen capon, buen carnero. Tra lara, &c.

Quarto—Comprar barato, y vender caro. Tra lara, &c.

Quinto—Con el blanco aguar el tinto. Tra lara, &c.

Sexto—Tener siempre el lomo en siesto. Tra lara, &c.

Septimo—Guardase bien del sereno. Tra lara, &c.

Octavo—Obrar la suya, y lo ageno. Tra lara, &c.

Nono—Hazar del penitente esclavo. Tra lara, &c.

Decimo—Mesclarse en cosas d'estado. Tra lara, &c.

Coro.—Estos diez mandamientos se encierran en dos—
Todo para mi, y nada para vos.

Tra lara, tra lara, &c.

The whole performance was received with an applause which awoke the little aide-de-camp's genius to such an extent, that he volunteered to sing some stanzas of his own, immeasurably more poignant. He was in the act of filling a bumper to the "down-fall of all monkery on the face of the earth," when the report of a musket was heard, and the bottle was shivered in his hand.

The honour of Don Ignacio Trueno Relampago was never in greater danger, for he instantly turned much whiter than his own pocket-handkerchief: but

3—Always get a good dinner.

4—In all bargains be winner.

5—Cool your red wine with white.

6—Turn day into night.

7—Give the bailiff the slip.

8—Make the world fill your scrip.

9—Make your convert a slave.

10—To your king play the knave.

Chorus.—Those ten commandments make but *two*—
All things for *me*, and none for *you*.

Tra lara, tra lara.

the Spaniard is a brave fellow, after all ; and seeing that I drew out my pistols, he drew his sword, ordered his troopers to mount, and prepared for battle. But, who can fight against fortune ? Our horses, which had been picketed at a few yards' distance in the depth of the shade, were gone. A French battalion of tirailleurs, accidentally coming on our route, had surrounded the grove, and carried off the horses unperceived, while our gallant troopers where chorusing the songster. The sentinel left in charge of them had, of course, given way to the allurements of "sweet nature's kind restorer, balmy sleep," and awoke only to find himself in French hands.

Don Ignacio would have fought a legion of fiends ; but seven hundred and fifty sharpshooters were a much more unmanageable affair ; and on our holding a council of war, (which never fights,) and with a whole circle of bayonets glittering at our breasts, I advised a surrender without loss of time. The troopers were already disarmed, and the Don, appealing to me as evidence, that he had done all that could be required by the most punctilious valour, surrendered his sword with the grace of a hero of romance. The Frenchmen enjoyed the entire scene prodigiously, laughed a great deal, drank our healths out of our own bottles, and finished by a general request, that the Don would indulge them with an encore of the chant, which had so tickled their ears during their advance in the wood. The Don complied, *malgrè*, *bongrè* ; and at the conclusion of this feat, the French

colonel, resolved not to be outdone in any thing, called on one of his subalterns for a song. The subaltern hopelessly searched his memory for its lyrical stores; but after half a dozen snatches of “chansons,” and breaking down in them all, he volunteered, in despair, what he pronounced, “the most popular love-song in all Italy.” Probably not a syllable of it was understood by any one present but myself; yet this did not prevent its being applauded to the skies, and pronounced one of the most brilliant specimens of Italian sensibility. It was in *Latin*, and a fierce attack on the Jesuits, which the young officer, a palpable *philosophe*, had brought with him from the *symposia* of the “Ecole Polytechnique:”—

Mortem norunt animare *

Et tumultus suscitare,

Inter reges, et sedare.

Tanquam sancti adorantur,

Tanquam reges dominantur,

Tanquam fures deprædantur.

Dominantur temporale,

Dominantur spirituale,

Dominantur omnia male.

* Breeders of all foreign wars,

Breeders of all household jars,

Snugly 'scaping all the scars.

Worshipp'd, like the saints they make ;

Tyrants, forcing fools to quake ;

Grasping all we brew or bake.

All our souls and bodies ruling,

All our passions hotly schooling,

All our wit and wisdom fooling.

Hos igitur Jesuitas,
 Helluones, hypocritas,
 Fuge, si cœlestia quæras.

Vita namque Christiana
 Abhorret ab hac doctrinâ,
 Tanquam fictâ et insanâ.

The colonel of the tirailleurs was a complete specimen of the revolutionary soldier. He was a dashing figure, with a bronzed face; or at least so much of it, as I could discover through the most inordinate pair of moustaches ever worn by a warrior. He was ignorant of everything on earth but his profession, and laughed at the waste of time in poring over books; his travelling-library consisting of but two, the imperial army-list, and the muster-roll of his regiment. His family recollections went no higher than his father, a cobbler in Languedoc. But he was a capital officer, and the very material for a *chef-de-bataillon*; rough, brave, quick, and as hardy as iron. Half a dozen scars gave evidence of his having shared the glories of France on the Rhine, the Po, and the Danube; and a cross of the Legion

Lords of all our goods and chattels,
 Firebrands of our bigot battles.
 When you see them, spring your rattles.

Shun them, as you'd shun the Pest;
 Shun them, teacher, friend, and guest;
 Shun them, north, south, east, and west.

France, her true disease has hit;
 France has made the vagrants flit;
 France has swamp'd the Jesuit.

of Honour showed that his emperor was a different person from the object of Don Ignacio's cureless wrath, the war-minister who "made a point of neglecting all possible merit below that of a field-marshal."

CHAPTER XLV.

“ His marches are expedient to this town ;
His forces strong, his soldiers confident.
All the unsettled humours of the land,
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,
With ladies’ faces, and fierce dragons’ spleens,
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,
Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,
To make a hazard of new fortunes here.
The interruption of their churlish drums
Breaks off more circumstance. They are at hand.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE Frenchman, with all his *brusquerie*, was civil enough to regret my capture, “ particularly as it laid him under the necessity of taking me far from my route ; his regiment then making forced marches to Andalusia, to join Dupont’s division ; and for the purpose of secrecy, the strictest orders having been given that the prisoners which they might make in the way should be carried along with them.” As I had forwarded my official papers from Galicia to Castile, and was regarded simply as an English tourist, I had no sense of personal hazard ; and putting the best complexion which I could upon my

misadventure, I rode along with the column over hill and dale, enjoying the various aspects of one of the most varied and picturesque countries in the world. Our marches were rapid, but chiefly by night ; thus evading at once the intolerable heat of the Spanish day, and collisions with the people. We bivouacked in the shelter of woods, or in the shadow of hills, during the sultry hours ; and recommenced our march in the cool of the eve, with short halts, until sun-rise. Then we flung ourselves again under the shade of the trees, and enjoyed those delights of rest and appetite, which are unknown to all but to the marchers and fasters for twelve hours together.

But, on our crossing the Sierra Morena, and taking the direction of Andalusia, the scene was wholly changed. The country was like one vast field of battle. The peasants were every where in arms, villages were seen burning along the horizon, and our constant vigilance was necessary to guard against a surprise. Every soldier who lay down to rest^d but a few yards from the column, or who attempted to forage the villages, was sure to be shot or stilettoed ; provisions were burned before our faces ; and even where we were not actually fired on, the frowns of the population showed sufficiently that the day of revenge was at hand.

At length we reached the range of hills which surround the plain of Cordova ; yet only just in time to see the army of Dupont marching out from the city gates, in the direction of Andujar. As I stood beside the colonel, I could observe, by the

knitting of his brow, that the movement did not satisfy his military sagacity. "What a quantity of baggage!" he murmured: "how will it be possible to carry such a train through the country, or how to fight, with such an encumbrance embarrassing every step?—Unless the Spanish generals are the greatest fools on earth, or unless Dupont has a miracle worked for him, he must either abandon three-fourths of his waggons, or be ruined."

But I was now to have a nearer interest in the expedition. The battalion had no sooner joined the army on its advance, than I was ordered to appear before the chief of the staff. The language of this officer was brief, but expressive.

"You are a spy."

"You are misinformed. I am a gentleman and an Englishman."

"Look here." He produced a copy of my letter to the junta of Castile, which some clerk in the French pay had treacherously transmitted from Madrid. "What answer have you to this?"

I flung the letter on the table.

"What right have you to require an answer? I have not come voluntarily to the quarters of the French army; I am a prisoner; I am not even in a military capacity. You would only act in conformity to the law of nations, by giving me my liberty this moment; and I demand that you shall do your duty."

"I shall do it! If you have any arrangements to make, you had better lose no time; for I wait only the general's signature to my report, to have you

shot." He turned on his heel. A sergeant with a couple of grenadiers entered, and I was consigned for the night to the provost-marshal. How anxiously I spent that night, I need not say. I was in the hands of violent men, exasperated by the popular resistance, and accustomed to disregard life. I braced myself up to meet my untoward catastrophe, and determined at least not to disgrace my country by helpless solicitation. I wrote a few letters, committed myself to a protection above the passions and vices of man, wrapped my cloak round me, and sank into a sound slumber.

I was aroused by the discharge of cannon, and found the camp in commotion. The Spaniards, under Reding and Castaños, had, as the colonel anticipated, fallen upon our line of march at daybreak, and cut off a large portion of the baggage-train. It had been loaded with the church-plate, and general plunder of Cordova; and the avarice of the French had obviously involved them in formidable difficulty. But, even in the universal tumult, the importance of my seizure was not forgotten; and I was ordered to the rear in charge of a guard. The action now began on all sides; the cannonade rapidly deepening on the flank and centre of the French position, and the musketry already beginning to rattle on various points of the line. From the height on which I stood, the whole scene lay beneath my eye; and nothing could have been better worth the speculation of any man—who was not under sentence of being shot as soon as the struggle was over!

I was aware of the reputation of the French general. He held a high name among the *braves* of the imperial army for the last ten years, and he had been foremost every where. In the desperate Italian campaign against the Austrians and Russians; in the victorious campaign of Austerlitz; in the sanguinary campaign of Eylau; Dupont was one of the most daring of generals of brigade.—But his pillage of Cordova had roused the Spanish wrath into fury; and the effort to carry off his plunder made it impossible for him to resist a vigorous attack, even with his twenty thousand veterans. He had indulged himself in Cordova, until the broken armies of the south had found time to rally; and a force of fifty thousand men was now marching down upon his centre. The hills, as far as the eye could range, were covered with the armed peasantry, moving like dark clouds over their sides, and descending by thousands to the field. The battle now raged furiously in the centre, and the charges of the French cavalry made fearful gaps in the Spanish battalions.

At length, the rising of the dust on the right showed that a strong column was approaching, which might decide the day. My heart beat slow, as I saw the tricolor floating above its bayonets. It was the advanced guard, with Dupont at its head—a force of three thousand men, which had returned rapidly on its steps, as soon as the sound of the attack had reached it. It was boldly resisted by the Swiss and Walloon brigades of the Spanish line:

but the French fire was heavy, its manœuvre was daring, and I began to fear for the fate of the day ; when a loud explosion, and a hurried movement, at the extreme of the French position, turned my eyes to the left wing. There the Spanish attack had swept every thing before it. Brigade after brigade was giving way, and the country was covered with scattered horsemen, infantry retiring in disorder, and broken and captured guns. The peasantry, too, had joined in the pursuit, and the whole wing seemed utterly ruined.

To retrieve this disorder was now hopeless ; for the French general had extended his line to the extraordinary length of ten miles. His baggage-train was his ruin. The whole Spanish line now advanced, shouting, and only halting at intervals to cannonade the enemy. The French returned a feeble fire, and began to retreat. But retreat was now impossible, and they must fight, or be massacred. At this moment I saw an officer, from the spot where Dupont sat on his charger, surrounded by his staff, gallop between the two armies. He was met by a Spanish officer. The firing ceased.—Dupont had surrendered, with all the troops in Andalusia !

I was now at liberty, and I was received by the Spanish commander-in-chief with the honours due to my mission and my country. After mutual congratulations on this most brilliant day, I expressed my wish to set off for Madrid without delay. An escort of cavalry was ordered for me, and by mid-

night I had left behind me the slaughter and the triumph, the noblest of Spanish fields, the immortal Baylen !

The night was singularly dark ; and as the by-roads of the Peninsula are confessedly among the most original specimens of the road-making art, our attention was chiefly occupied, for the first hour, in finding our way in Indian file. At length, on the country's opening, I rode forward to the head of the troop, and addressed some questions, on our distance from the next town, to the officer. He at once pronounced my name, and my astonishment was not less than his own. In the commandant of the escort I found my gallant, though most wayward, friend, Lafontaine !

His story was brief. In despair of removing Mordecai's reluctance to their marriage, and wholly unable to bring over Mariamne to his own opinion, that she would act the wiser part in taking the chances of the world along with himself ; he had resolved to enter the Russian, or the Turkish service, or any other, in which he had the speediest probability of ending his career by a bullet or a sabre-blow. The accidental rencontre of one of his relations, an officer high in the Spanish service, had led him into the Peninsula ; where, as a Royalist, he was warmly received by a people devoted to their kings ; and had just received a commission in the cavalry of the guard, when the French war broke out. He felt no scruples in acting as a soldier of Spain ; for, with

the death of Louis, he had regarded all his national ties as broken, and he was now a citizen of the world.

I ventured to mention the name of Mariamne ; and I found that, there at least, inconstancy had no place. He spoke of her with eloquent tenderness, and it was evident that, with all his despair of ever seeing her again, she still held the first place in his heart. In this wandering, yet by no means painful, interchange of thoughts, we moved on for some hours ; when one of the advanced troopers rode back, to tell us that he had heard firing in the distance.

We galloped forward, and from the brow of the next hill saw flames rising from a village in the valley beneath, and a skirmish going on between some marauding troops and the peasantry. Lafontaine instantly ordered an advance ; and our whole troop were soon in the centre of the village, busily employed with the pistol and sabre. The French, taken by surprise, made but a slight resistance, and, after a few random shots, ran to a neighbouring wood.

I was in the act of congratulating him, on his easy success, when he pointed out to me a Spanish post-carriage, driven at a desperate rate towards the neighbouring wood ; a French soldier was on the foremost mule, and a couple of dragoons were in full gallop along with him. It was evident that they were carrying off a prisoner, and probably the plunder of the village. Our whole party were instantly in pursuit, and we came up with them as the carriage-wheel became entangled in the thicket. One of the dra-

goons fired ; Lafontaine knocked him off his horse, with a blow of his sabre, and threw open the door of the carriage. Within, I could only discover, by the light of a lantern, that there was a human figure ; but it lay as if dead, on a heap of plate and other valuables, evidently the pillage of the party.

Turning to Lafontaine, I asked, "what was to be done with our capture ?" but he made me no answer. He had dismounted, and to my great alarm, I saw that the shot of the dragoon had taken effect ; his sword arm had been hit, and his countenance exhibited excessive pain.

The villagers, by this time, had crowded round us, and my first enquiry was, for some shelter for my wounded friend. I was answered, that we were but a few hundred yards from the mansion of a "hidalgo," of great wealth, and known for his munificence to the people. As the stranger seemed to be as much in hazard as my friend, I ordered them both to be taken to the house of the hidalgo. Our procession now moved on through the forest, accompanied by many a *viva*, until we arrived within sight of the mansion.

Even in that moment of anxiety, and with scarcely more than the first dawn to guide us, I could not help being struck with the cultivated beauty of the avenue through which we passed, and the profusion and variety of the flowers, which now began to breathe their opening incense to the dawn. The house was old, but large and handsome, and the furniture of the apartment into which we were shown,

was singularly tasteful and costly. Who the owner was, seemed scarcely known among the bold fellows who accompanied us ; but by their pointings to their foreheads, and their making the sign of the cross at every repetition of my enquiries, I was inclined to think him some escaped lunatic. I shortly, however, received a message from him, to tell me, that so soon as the crowd should be dismissed, he would visit the officer. The apartment was cleared, and he came.

This was a new wonder for me. It was Mordecai that entered the room. The light was still so imperfect, that for a while he could not recognise either of us ; and when I advanced to take his hand, and addressed him by his name, he started back as if he had trod upon a snake.

But recovering himself, he held out his hand and said, " Sir, you have done me a service too serious this morning, to allow me to stand upon ceremony with you. You, and your friend, are welcome to all that my house can offer.—But I must beg of you not to repeat my name in the presence of my servants. This is the country of prejudices."

He was evidently enfeebled by the events of the hour, for he proceeded in a faint tone, to tell us, that he had been the prisoner, whom we rescued ; the French skirmishers having plundered his house of its plate, and carried him away, in the hope of a ransom, or to death, if the hope failed them. I now announced myself ; and whether from a sense of safety, or the recollection of other times, he heard it

with unequivocal gladness. He was now in full possession of all his faculties. An hour before, he had been in hands, from which he received only insults, and expected only death. He almost embraced me. He was profuse in his gratitude to us all; declared, that to me and my brave friend, he was indebted infinitely more than he could ever repay. He was about to repeat his thanks "to the Captain," in person, who lay with his head wrapped in his cloak upon the sofa, and groaning with the torture of his wound; when, fearing the effects on the nerves of my invalid friend, I hurried Mordecai into another apartment, and there heard his brief history, since we had parted.

Mariamne had suddenly grown discontented with Poland; which to Mordecai himself had become a weary residence, from the ravages of the French war. "For some reason, unaccountable to me," said the old man, "she set her heart upon Spain, and had now been domiciled in this secluded spot for a year. But she was visibly fading away. She read and wrote much, and was even more attached to her harp and her flowers than ever; yet declared that she had bid farewell to the world." The father wept as he spoke, but his were the tears of sorrow rather than of anguish. They stole quietly down his cheeks, and showed that the stern and haughty spirit was subdued within him.

I had not ventured to allude to Lafontaine; but the current of his own thoughts at length led to that forbidden topic. "I am afraid, Mr. Marston," said he, "that I have been too harsh with my child. I looked for her alliance with some of the opulent

among my own kindred ; or I should have rejoiced if your regards had been fixed on her, and hers on you. And in those dreams, I forgot that the affections must choose for themselves. I had no objection to the young Frenchman, but that he was a stranger, and was poor.—Yet are not we ourselves strangers ? and if he was poor, was not I rich ? But all is over now ; and I shall only have to follow my poor Mariamne, where I should have much rather preceded her,—to the grave.”

I now requested to see Mariamne. She met me with a cry of joy, and with a cheek of sudden crimson ; but, when the first flush passed away, her looks gave painful proof of the effect of solitude and sorrow. The rounded beauty of her cheek was gone ; her eyes, once dancing with every emotion, were fixed and hollow ; and her frame, once remarkable for symmetry, was thin and feeble. But, her heart was buoyant still, and when I talked of past scenes and recollections, her eye sparkled once more. Still, her manner was changed—it was softer and less capricious ; her language, even her voice was subdued. At length, after hearing some slight detail of her wanderings, and her fears, that the troubles of Spain might drive her from a country in whose genial climate and flowery fields “she had hoped to end her days ;” I incidentally asked—whether, in all her wanderings, she had heard of “my friend, Lafontaine.” How impossible is it to deceive the instinct of the female heart ! The look which she gave me, the searching glance of her fine eyes, which flashed with all their

former lustre, and the sudden quivering of her lip, told me how deeply his image was fixed in her recollection. She saw at once that I had tidings of her lover; and she hung upon the hand which I held out to her, with breathless and beseeching anxiety. I now discovered, that it was some rumour of his having crossed the Pyrenees, which awoke her sudden partiality for a residence in Spain. After some precautions, I revealed to her the facts—that he was as faithfully devoted to her as ever, and—that he was even under her roof!

I leave the rest of her story to be conjectured. I shall only say, that I saw her made happy; her former vivacity restored, her eye sparkling once more; and even the heart of her father cheered, and acknowledging “that there was happiness in the world, if men did not mar it for themselves.” The “course of true love” had at last, “run smooth.”

I was present at the marriage of Lafontaine. The trials of fortune had been of infinite service to *him*; they had sobered his eccentricity, taught him the value of a quiet mind, and prepared him for that manlier career which belongs to the husband and the father. I left them, thanking me in all the language of gratitude, promising to visit me in England.

My mission to the junta was speedily and successfully accomplished. Spain, in want of every thing but that which no subsidy could supply, a determination to die in the last entrenchment; was offered arms, ammunition, and the aid of an English army.

In her pride, and yet a pride which none could blame, she professed herself able to conquer by her own intrepidity. Later experience showed her, by many a suffering, the value of England as the guide, sustainer, and example of her national strength. But Spain had still the gallant distinction of being the first nation which, as one man, dared to defy the conqueror of all the great military powers of the Continent. The sieges of Saragossa and Gerona will immortalize the courage of the Spanish soldier; the guerilla campaigns will immortalize the courage of the Spanish peasant; and the memorable confession of the French Emperor, that "Spain was his greatest error, and his ultimate ruin," is a testimonial more lasting than the proudest trophy, to the magnanimous warfare of the Peninsula.

This was the crisis. The spirit of the whole European war now assumed a bolder, loftier, and more triumphant form. A sudden conviction filled the general heart, that the fortunes of the field were about to change. Nations which had, till then, been only emulous in prostration to the universal conqueror, now assumed the port of courage, prepared their arms, and longed to try their cause again in battle. The outcry of Spain, answered by the trumpet of England, pierced to the depths of that dungeon in which the intrigue and the power of France had laboured to bury the continental nations. The war of the Revolution has already found historians, of eloquence and knowledge worthy of so magnificent an era of human change. But, to me,

the chief interest arose from its successive developments of the European mind. The whole period was a continual awakening of faculties, hitherto almost unknown, in the great body of the people.—The first burst of the Revolution, like the first use of gunpowder, had only shown the boundless force of a new element of destruction. The Spanish insurrection showed its protecting and preservative power. The tremendous energy which seemed to defy all control, was there seen effecting the highest results of national defence, and giving proof of the irresistible strength provided in the population of *every* land. What nation of Europe does not possess a million of men for its defence; and what invader could confront a million of men on their own soil? Let this truth be felt, and aggression must become hopeless, and war cease to exist among men.

For the first time in the history of war, it was discovered, that the true force of kingdoms had been mistaken—a mistake which had lasted for a thousand years; that armies were but splendid machines; and that, while they might be crushed by the impulse of machines more rapid, stronger, and more skilfully directed, nothing could crush the vigour of defence, supplied by a people.

The *levée en masse* of France was but the rudest, as it was the earliest, form of the new discovery. There, terror was the moving principle. The conscription was the recruiting-officer. The guillotine was the commander, who manœuvred the generals, the troops, and the nation. Yet, the revolutionary

armies differed in nothing from the monarchical, but in the superiority of their numbers, and the inferiority of their discipline.

The war of Spain was another, and a nobler advance. It was the war of a nation; in France the war was the conspiracy of a faction. In Spain the loss of the capital only inflamed the hostility of the provinces; in France the loss of the capital would have extinguished the Revolution; as it afterwards extinguished the Empire. I think, that I can see the provision for a still bolder and more beneficent advance, even in those fierce developments of national capabilities. But, it will, perhaps, be left to other nations. Spain and France have a yoke upon their minds, which will disqualify them both from acting the nobler part, of guides to Europe. Superstition contains in itself the canker of slavery; perfect freedom is essential to perfect power; and the nation which, from the cradle, prostrates itself to the priest, must retain the early flexure and feebleness of its spine. The great experiment must be reserved for a nobler public mind; for a people religious without fanaticism, and free without licentiousness; honouring the wisdom of their fathers, without rejecting the wisdom of the living age; aspiring to the ministration of universal good, without the stain of ambition, and conscious that its opulence, knowledge, and grandeur, are only gifts for mankind.

The system of the war was now fully established. All the feelings of England were fixed on the Penin-

sula, and all the politics of her statesmen and their rivals, were alike guided by the course of the conflict. The prediction was gallantly fulfilled—that the French empire would there expose its flank to English intrepidity; that the breaching battery which was to open the way to Paris, would be fixed on the Pyrenees; and that the true “sign of conquest,” was the banner of England.

CHAPTER XLVI.

“Tongues which neither know
My faculties nor person ; yet will be
The chroniclers of my doing. Let me say
'Tis but the fate of man. We must not stint
Our necessary actions, in the fear
To meet malicious censurers, which ever,
As ravenous fishes, do a vessel follow
That is new trimmed. If we shall stand still,
In fear, our motion will be marked or carped at.
We should take root here, where we sit, or sit
State statues only.” SHAKSPEARE.

THE battle of the Ministry was fought in Spain, and as victoriously as the battle of our army. We saw Opposition gradually throw away its weapons, and gradually diminish in the popular view, until its existence was scarcely visible. Successive changes varied the cabinet, but none shook its stability. Successive ministers sank into the grave, but the ministry stood. Perceval perished ; but the political system of the cabinet remained unchanged. Castlereagh perished—Liverpool perished ; but the political system still survived. The successive pilots might give up the helm, but the course of the

great vessel of the State continued the same—guided by the same science, and making her way through sunshine, and through storm, to the same point of destination.

The three successive ministers were men of high ability for government, though the character of their ability exhibited the most remarkable distinctions. Perceval had been a lawyer. To the House, he carried the acuteness, the logic, and even the manner of his profession with him. Without pretending to the triumphs of eloquence, he singularly possessed the power of conviction; without effecting changes in the theory of the constitution, he put its truths in a new light; and without a trace of bigotry, he defended, with conscientious vigour, the rights of the national religion. Long maintaining a bold resistance at the head of the feeblest minority perhaps ever known in Parliament, he had shown unshaken courage and undismayed principle. This defence was at length turned into assault, and his opponents were driven from power. His ministry was only too brief for his fame. But, when he fell by the hand of a maniac, he left a universal impression on the mind of the empire, that the blow had deprived it of a great ministerial mind.

Castlereagh exhibited a character of a totally different order; yet equally fitted for his time. An Irishman, he had the habitual intrepidity of his countrymen. Nobly connected, and placed high in public life by that connexion, he showed himself capable of sustaining his ministerial rank by his

personal capacity. Careless of style, he was yet an effective debater. But it was in the council, that his value to the country was most acknowledged. His conception of the rights, the influence, and the services of England, was lofty; and, when the period came, for deciding on her rank in the presence of continental diplomacy, he was her chosen, and her successful, representative. His natural place was among the councils of camps, where sovereigns were the soldiers.—The “march to Paris” was due to his courage: and the first fall of Napoleon was effected by the ambassador of England.

Lord Liverpool was a man equally fitted for his time. The war had triumphantly closed. But, a period of perturbed feelings and financial necessities followed; it required in the minister a combination of sound sense and practical vigour—of deference for the public feelings, yet respect for the laws—of promptitude in discovering national resources, and yet of firmness in repelling factious change. The head of the cabinet possessed those qualities. No man formed his views with clearer intelligence; and no man pursued them with more steady determination. Perhaps, disdaining the glitter of popularity, no minister, for the last half century, had been so singularly exempt from all the sarcasms of public opinion. The nation relied on his sincerity, honoured his purity of principle, and willingly confided its safety to hands, which none believed capable of a stain.

But the characters of those three ministers were

striking, in a still higher point of view. It is scarcely fanciful to conceive that their qualities had been constructed to meet their times. Perceval—acute, strict, and with strong religious conceptions; to meet a period, when religious laxity in the cabinet had already enfeebled the defence of the national religion. Castlereagh—stately, bold, and high-toned—to meet a period, when the fate of Europe was to be removed from cabinets to the field, and when he was to carry the will of England among assembled monarchs. Liverpool—calm, rational, and practical; the man of conscience and common sense to meet the period, when the great questions of religion had been quieted, the great questions of the war had died with the war, and when the supreme difficulty of government was, to reconcile the pressure of financial exigency with the progress of the people; to invigorate the public frame without inflaming it by dangerous innovation; and to reconstruct the whole commercial constitution, without infringing on those principles which had founded the prosperity of the empire.

At length the consummation came: the French empire fell, on the field, by the hand of England. All the sovereigns of Europe rushed in, to strip the corpse, and each carried back a portion of the spoils. But the conqueror was content with the triumph, and asked no more glory, than the liberation of mankind.

In the midst of these colossal events; all personal interests sink into trifles. And yet, fortune had not

neglected to reward the gentler virtues of one worthy of its noblest gifts. In my first campaign with the Prussian troops in France, I had intrusted to the care of the old domestic whom I found in the Chateau de Montauban, an escritoire and a picture, belonging to the family of Clotilde. The old man had disappeared; and I took it for granted, that he had been plundered, or had died.

But, one day, after my return from the splendid entertainment with which the Regent welcomed the allied sovereigns, I found Clotilde deeply agitated. The picture of her relative was before her, and she was gazing at its singularly expressive and lovely countenance with intense interest.

She flew into my arms. "I have longed for your coming," said she, with glowing lips and tearful eyes, "to offer at least one proof of gratitude for years of the truest protection, and the most generous love. Michelle, the husband of my nurse, has arrived; and he tells me, that this escritoire contains the title-deeds of my family.—I was resolved that you alone should open it. In the frame of that picture, in a secret drawer, is the key." The spring was touched, the key was found; and in the little chest was discovered, uninjured by chance or time, the document, entitling my beautiful and high-hearted wife to one of the finest possessions in France. By a singular instance of good fortune, the property had not been alienated, like so many of the estates of the noblesse; and it now lay open to the claims of the original proprietorship.

I hastened to Paris. My claim was acknowledged by the returned Bourbon; and Clotilde had the delight of once more sitting under the vine and the fig-tree of her ancestors. The old domestic had made it the business of years, to obtain the means of reaching England. But the war had placed obstacles in his way every where; and he devoted himself thenceforth to the guardianship of his precious deposit, as the duty of his life. He was almost pathetic, in his narration of the hazards to which it had been exposed in the perpetual convulsions of the country, and in the rejoicing with which he felt himself at last enabled to place it in the hands of its rightful mistress, the last descendant of the noble house of De Tourville.—The wheel now turned, for myself; and I had to draw a prize in the great lottery of fortune.

On the evening of my birth-day, Clotilde had given a rustic *fête* to the children of her tenantry; and all were dancing in front of the chateau, with the gaiety and with the grace, which nature seems to have conferred as an especial gift on even the humblest classes of France.

The day was one of the luxury of summer. The landscape before me was a rich extent of plain and hill; the fragrance of the vast gardens of the chateau was rising as the twilight approached; my infants were clustering round my knee; and in that thankfulness of heart, which is not the less sincere for its not being expressed in words; I came to the conclusion, that no access of wealth, or of honours, could add to my substantial happiness at that hour.

My reverie was broken by the sound of a *calèche* driving up the avenue. A courier alighted from it, who brought a letter with a black seal, addressed to me. It was from the family solicitor.—My noble brother had died, in Madeira; where he had gone in the hopeless attempt, to recruit a frame which he had enervated by a life of excess.

In that hour, I gave him the regrets which belonged to the tie of blood. I forgot his selfishness, and forgave his alienation. I thought of him only as the remembered playfellow of my early days; and could say in heart—"Alas, my brother!" The landscape before me at last sank into night; and with feelings darkened like it, yet calm and still, I saw the closing of a day which, painful as was the cause; yet called me to new duties, gave me a stronger hold upon society, and placed me in that position, which I fully believe to combine more of the true materials of happiness and honour than any other on earth—that of an opulent English nobleman.

My brother dying childless, had devolved the family estates to me, disburdened of the results of his prodigality; but I had still much to occupy me, in restoring them from the neglect of years. The life of the member of government was now to alternate with the life of the country gentleman; and my transfer to the House of Peers gave me that comparative leisure, essential to the fulfilment of the large and liberal duties which belong to the English landholder. To cheer the country life by rational hospitality; to make friends of those whom nature

has made dependents; to sustain those laws, by which the rights of every man are sustained; to excite the country gentlemen to the study of that noblest and most primitive of all arts, the cultivation of the soil; to maintain among that bold and generous race a high sense of their purposes, their position, and their powers; to invigorate the principles which had always made them the surest defenders of the throne in its day of adversity; and to fix in their minds by example, more powerful than precept, a sense of solemn fidelity to the faith and freedom of their ancestors. These were the objects which I proposed to myself, and which the most powerful intellect, or the highest rank, would be well employed in labouring to fulfil.

Yet with those tranquil and retired pursuits, I continued to mingle the activity of public life. I still bore my part in the discussions of the legislature. I still retained all my early sensibility to the enjoyments which Providence has so largely distributed through life.—Marriage itself freshens the feelings of man; gives him a sense of the nobler affections, and invigorates the heart, by fixing it on an object to which the devotion of all its finer impulses is due. But I also remembered the difficulty of making new friendships, and I the more faithfully sustained the old. From Guiscard and Vornhorst, I heard at intervals; and with Lafontaine and his Mariamne, a correspondence was kept up, rendered interesting by the graceful animation of the husband, and the piquant mixture of native romance and

personal talent in the wife. They had fixed their abode on the banks of the Gave, in one of their loveliest spots; and with Pau in the distance, and surrounded by their vineyards and gardens, seemed to realize a scene in Arcadia. Guiscard had obtained the diplomatic distinctions for which his profound ability was framed, and held a high place in the councils of Prussia. Vornhorst, my gallant and good-humoured comrade, as true a heart as ever beat under the uniform of a general of dragoons, had obtained the government of a Hungarian province, and was revelling in all the delights of a rank, which made him the model of the troops, the entertainer of the nobility, and the friend of everybody.

“Come and see me,” he wrote, “and come, before I am grown too fat to ride after the fleetest pack of stag-hounds between Buda and Constantinople. Come, in time for the emperor’s birthday, and you shall see a Parade, such as will remind you of our old French affairs, and troops as showy as the best under Clairfait and Coburg. I have a little troop of my own, round me at this moment, all luckily resembling their mother, once the *belle* of Hungary; and to-day I give a dinner to the staff, on my eldest boy’s receiving his first commission in the imperial guards. The first toast, after the emperor, to-day, shall be the health of my friend, Marston.” The letter arrived on my own birthday, and the health of my brave friend was not forgotten.

On the same day, I received a letter from Mordecai. It was dated from the Pyrenees, where he had gone

to nurse his increasing years, under the care of his daughter and her husband, and renew his feelings by the sight and society of their lovely children. His letter was as mystic as usual, yet written with larger views of the future, and a more abstracted and lofty glance at the course of events in our eventful time.

I had long regarded Mordecai as a man singularly thrown away. Some casual expressions during our early intercourse, gave me ground for thinking that a large share of his severity to mankind, his contempt for society, and even his adoption of his stern trade, had been the result of ill-usage in the commencement of his career.—He had been a distinguished student in his university, and had entered the world of public life, full of the hopes which the distinctions of the college are so apt to give, and which the sullenness of the world is so fond of crushing. In Germany, literature is the great pioneer to office, but it must be literature that can creep, as well as climb. He saw a crowd, of inferior talent, but of superior flexibility, thrust before him; and in defiance, and disdain, he abandoned literature; and under the guidance of some of his kindred turned to that pursuit, whose success ensures the homage alike of the sullen, the selfish, and the haughty. As his wealth accumulated, the sense of power was sharpened by the sense of retribution, and he enjoyed his indignant triumph, in proportion, at once, to the rank and to the humiliation of his victims. In some of those wild moments, in which the spirit of the man irrestrainably broke forth, he has told me, that

he would not have surrendered the enjoyment of this contemptuous revenge, for the throne of the Czars; that, when he glanced round his grim and lonely chamber, and saw the names of so many nobles of his own country, as well as of ours, inscribed on the boxes which contained their title-deeds; he could almost imagine himself sitting in judgment on their pride; or even an avenging spirit, sent to smite the great ones of the world for the bitter pains which their arrogance had made him feel; punishing the cold neglect, which to a man of genius is the deepest of all insults; and paying back the cruel injury, done by the partiality of patronage, to faculties once glowing with zeal for the good of his country, enamoured with the passionate love of honour, and swelling with high-toned benevolence to mankind.

But, time had softened him; a growing sense of the trivialities of all things earthly had extinguished the thirst of vengeance; and his mind had now found leisure to recover its original tranquillity, and look with the purified eye of experience on the fluctuations of governments, nations, and men.

His letter, after some personal inquiries, and telling me that it was "his tribute to the birthday of one whom years had only taught him to esteem," broke off into his own contemplations.—"I am writing at the dawn of day. All the household are hushed. The early rising peasantry alone are seen in motion, driving their sheep up to the hills. I see the whole extent of Pau from my chamber window, but not a smoke rises from a city of twenty thousand people.

The pure air of this early hour shows me the chateau of Henri Quatre, like a model, with every tint of time on the stone, every lichen clinging to the crevices of the towers, and every coat of arms on the gates and battlements. But before me, throwing all the works of man into immeasurable littleness, sweeps the whole amphitheatre of the Pyrenees, a range of a hundred and fifty miles, a magnificent succession of vast slopes coloured with every successive hue, of tillage, forest, green pasture, rock glittering in the sun, and, above all, the snowy range, glowing with the purple and rose of morning. In what a glorious world do we live ! What splendours are lavished on this wilderness of mountains ! Yet I am at this moment, perhaps, the only being who sees this profusion of natural loveliness. There is no stir of life, except in the few shepherds and their sheep, round the whole horizon. In the course of an hour, the sun will be up, and this view will be lost in vapour. Yet, here are lights and colours, lustres and sparklings, to which pyramids of jewels would scarcely be a rival ; here are ascending circles of radiance, fixed rainbows, to which the bow in the clouds would be pale.

“The thought occurs to me at this moment ; may not all Nature be but a display for beings superior to man, whose eye is never closed, and whose faculties never slumber. Are the brilliancies of the diamond in its matrix to be lost, until it falls into the hands of man ? For what purpose are the infinite varieties of beauty which vegetation exhibits on untrodden shores—the grandeurs of sunset on the ocean—the thousand

powerful and rich phenomena of Nature, the meteor, the aurora, and the comet, passing as they do, when the senses of man are closed in sleep? Can they be meant for the eye of man alone? Are there not other beings that walk the earth—forms nobler than our own, yet invisible; with senses more powerful, refined, and vivid than ours; and carrying on the great designs of Providence, without our knowledge, or our help; as man would carry on the little works and watchings of this world, while all his children were slumbering in their cradles around him?"

The letter then adverted to the state of European politics, on which he cast a foreboding glance; and in which he seemed to think that England was destined, to take, as she had already done so often, the leading place in the general trial.

"Yet," said he, "I have seen in the whole course of the past trial of nations, a guardian hand so palpably stretched over England, that I have strong faith in her security.

"In the great war of our time, the greatest since the fall of the Roman empire, the war of the French Revolution—I think, that I can trace a divine protection, distinctly given to England, as the champion of Europe. I offer but the outline of my view; but to me the proof is demonstrative.—In every instance in which France aimed an especial blow at England, that blow was retorted by an especial retribution; while her assaults on the continental kingdoms were made with triumphant impunity.

"Let me give the examples.—The French expedi-

tion to Egypt was formed with the express object of breaking down the influence of England in the East, and ultimately subverting her Indian empire.—That expedition was the *first* which tarnished the military renown of the Republic, it cost her a fleet, and lost her an army. Of the army which Napoleon led to Egypt, not a battalion returned to Europe, but as the prisoners of England!

“The French invasion of Spain was a blow aimed *expressly* at England. Its object was the invasion of England.—The Spanish war broke down the military renown of the Empire, and was pronounced by Napoleon to be the origin of his ruin!

“The invasion of Russia was a blow aimed *expressly* at England. Its object was the extinction of English commerce in the whole sea-line of the north.—That invasion was punished, by the ruin of the whole veteran army of France!

“Napoleon himself at length met the troops of England. He met them with an arrogant assumption of victory—“*Ah ! je les tiens, ces Anglais.*”—Never was presumption more deeply punished. That one conflict *destroyed* him ; his laurels, his diadem, and his dynasty, were blasted together!

“It is not less memorable, that during the entire Revolutionary war, France was never suffered to inflict an injury on England; with one exception the perfidious seizure of the English travelling in the French territories under the safeguard of the Imperial passports. But this, too, had its punishment—and one marked by the most especial and characteristic

retribution.—Napoleon himself was sent to a dungeon! By a fate unheard of among fallen princes, the man who had treacherously made prisoners of the English, was himself made a prisoner, was delivered into English hands, was consigned to captivity in English chains, and died the prisoner of England!”

THE END.





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